INFALLIBILITY

A Paper

read before

The Society of St. Thomas of Canterbury

by the

Rev. VINCENT McNABB, O.P.

At Holborn Town Hall, on May 17, 1905

With an Introduction

by the

Rev. SPENCER JONES, M.A.

President of the Society of St. Thomas of Canterbury

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INTRODUCTION

One principal aim of the Society of St. Thomas is to remove obstructions to Reunion by substituting conference for controversy, and by organising discussions on the proper basis of careful, precise, and therefore representative statements; and there are special reasons, geographical, historical, and philosophical, for directing our attention in the first instance to the West.

Geographically speaking, England forms part of the Church in the West; historically speaking, Rome, which is the Apostolic See of the West, is also the mother of English Christianity, an Ecclesia Anglicana not in conscious dependence on the Holy See in spirituals being a phenomenon unknown to history until the sixteenth century, when that dependence was first disturbed and afterwards destroyed by the passion of Henry VIII. and by the policy of Elizabeth; while philosophically speaking, the prestige of Rome, everywhere acknowledged throughout the world, the fact that she commands the allegiance of some 240,000,000—that is, of the great majority of Christians—and that with her claim to infallibility she cannot formally change without committing an act of suicide,—all this entitles her, in questions like these, to the first and paramount claim

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upon our consideration. Now, of all obstructions in the way of reunion with Rome, the most formidable, because the least recognised, is the assumption that we understand her.

Consider for a moment the difficulty which forms the subject of the following lecture: it is urged at once, with the utmost confidence, that whatever may have been our hopes before the year 1870, the Vatican definition of Papal Infallibility in that year has destroyed them quite. The authority of Dr. Dollinger's name, and that often without any study of his works or of the peculiar circumstances of his case, is generally quoted as decisive. But how many of us have considered the subject apart from controversy? How many would be prepared to submit their explanation of the dogma to a trained theologian of the Roman Catholic Church? How many of us have secured that "thorough grasp of the entire principle of tradition and development," without which, Dr. Schanz declares, "it is not possible to obtain a true and genuine Catholic notion of Papal Infallibility"? And yet, who would send us to the publications of the Rationalist Free Press if we were making our first inquiries into the subject of Revelation? Objections belong to the end, and not to the beginning of such inquiries. Nor should it be forgotten that, however we may repudiate the term, or differ as to the mode, we do, in fact, all recognise the principle of Infallibility in substance; nor has the Roman definition of it been formally rejected by the Anglican Communion, for the very reason that it has never been proposed for our acceptance.

But at the back of this lies another assumption of a more formidable kind, viz. that the Reformation in England was a religious, instead of being what in fact it was, mainly a political, movement. Where do we find in the sixteenth century any genuine repudiation of the Church of Rome on the part of the Church of England?

Was it when Archbishop Warham entered his solemn protest on his death-bed against "this new papacy," as Henry's monstrous usurpation was sometimes styled? Or when Henry and Elizabeth, each in turn, broke the promise they had both of them made not to disturb our spiritual relations with the Holy See? Was it when Henry recognised the Holy See for the purpose of consulting it, and only realised the righteousness of rejecting it when its judgment went against him? Or was it when Elizabeth ignored the formal and precise petition of Convocation begging that our spiritual dependence on the Holy See might continue, and then proceeded to deprive the bishops of their sees for not taking their oaths that she was right and that they were wrong?

The fact is, and men are coming to realise it, that the entire process of the Reformation in this country was controlled by force and absolutely steeped in fraud; and, while in the past it has been the fashion to describe it as a settlement, a closer inspection compels us to acknowledge and to deplore the deposit of disorganisation which this wild and lawless movement too evidently left behind it. Every one knows that there were faults on both sides; that the age itself was an

age of intrigue; that the initial and stupendous step on the part of Henry compromised those who immediately succeeded him, and, by throwing the entire religious and political machinery out of gear, made the subsequent plots on the lives of Sovereigns, whether on the part of Protestants or Catholics, almost inevitable at that stage of civilisation, and under the peculiar circumstances of the time. But the fact stands out for all to see it, viz. that England and Rome were wrenched asunder in the sixteenth century, and that all subsequent attempts to revive the Catholicity of the former have manifested an unmistakable tendency towards Rome, and have been accused at once of popery. I do not forget the importance of distinguishing between the attempt to ascertain the truth about the Roman position, and asserting that the Roman position is true. Whether the first of these steps will lead us on to the second or not is a question which can only be answered by an experience which has not as yet been ours.

Meantime expositions like the following, with the free and genuine discussions to which they give rise, may serve at least to pave the way for events which are in the hands of God and are hidden from our eyes.

Further study, of course, may compel us, after really knowing what she is, to repudiate the Church of Rome, in spite of all we owe her, and of the peculiar relation in which for nearly a thousand years she stood towards ourselves.

But at least we can hope and pray for better things, recalling the solemn words of our Saviour, striving, in

our day and in our measure, not to "hug our resentments," or to glory in our shame, but rather to love one another as our Saviour has loved us, and so to fulfil the duty He has laid upon His disciples of convincing all men that it was indeed the Eternal Father who sent Him into the world.

The following lecture is here produced as in substance it was first delivered, with the addition of only a few paragraphs in the way of supplement. And it only remains for me to express my gratitude to the author for consenting in the first instance to deliver it, and for further consenting afterwards, at the urgent request of all the members, to put it into print.

SPENCER JONES,
President.

June 2nd, 1905.

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INFALLIBILITY

I NEED hardly remind my hearers that the subject-matter of the present paper is the Infallibility of the Teaching Church (Ecclesiæ Docentis) and not of the Church Taught (Ecclesiæ Discentis). This Infallibility may be provisionally defined as a divine endowment preserving the Church from formal error in the exercise of her teaching office.

Moreover, though the matter of Infallibility will be treated both theologically and historically, yet, through choice and circumstance, it will be the theology rather than the history of Infallibility that will claim our attention. Nor need it surprise us that a theologian who would defend, justify, or explain a doctrine of the Church need not deal mainly with its historical aspects. He cannot, indeed, dispense with history. It is as necessary to his theology as the past is to the present. Yet the true theologian, that is, the true philosopher of divine revelation, whilst recognising that God has committed some aspects of divine life and truth to the belief of men, is confident that they have not been committed as a mere theory to man's caprice. They have been handed over to an appointed warden. Christianity is not a philosophy,

but a Church; not a theory, but an Institution; not an intellectual idea, but a moral personality. Now, though a moral personality must have *roots* in the past, its genealogy is not its chief justification; nor is history its sole plea. It leans more heavily upon the present than the past, and though it often borrows from the future, since, to use the formula of evolution, "an organism is what it will become," nevertheless the strongest justification of the fact that it is, must ever be what it is, as a fact.

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I

ANTECEDENT PROBABILITIES

We come in touch with divinely inspired history at the outset of our thesis, in order to settle the question of antecedent probability. For no doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church can be separated from the Founder's plan of the Church; nor if a man disputes the nature of that plan, can he be brought to a better mind except by an appeal to the Book; that is, in case he will admit the historical accuracy of the Book. To approach the idea of our Lord's plan, we must take home to ourselves the nature of the One Who thought and wrought it out.

St. John records for us the Blessed Lord's own account of Himself spoken at a time when the most momentous questions were presenting themselves to the minds of the Apostles. Scarcely had the Master begun His last solemn address of instruction and consolation to His little flock in the supper-room than St. Thomas broke in upon His words, almost in a tone of contradiction, or at least of doubt, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus saith to him, "I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE: no man cometh to the

Father but by Me."[1] The problems raised by His approaching parting from the Apostles were taken at once to the higher plane of His own Divine mission and their human needs.

The Master's simple phrase bore reference to the three great needs of man in the sphere of conduct, belief, and worship. Man's spiritual perfection, for which alone the Saviour came into the world, demanded that man's ethical, intellectual, and religious faculties should find their proper object and motive. There are not wanting Christians who maintain that Christ came into the world merely to sanction and strengthen the ethical code which had been stamped on each man's conscience at his birth, and promulgated anew on Mount Sinai at the birth of the chosen people. To such as these, dogmas or mysteries are accounted nothing more than human inventions. Christ was merely the Way; *i.e.* the Model and Sanction of Ethics. Other groups of Christians maintain that our Lord came on earth, not merely to expound and sanction ethical truth, but to reveal dogmatic truth. To their mind Christ was not merely the Model and Sanction of Ethics, but the Guarantee of Dogma; not merely the Way, but the Truth. Still other groups of Christians, and these the most numerous and most historical, maintain, as they have always maintained, that Jesus Christ had a further mission to fulfil. He came not merely to point a way and to proclaim a truth, but to give strength both to hold on the way and to lay hold on the truth. He came to provide the means of grace. He was as

[1] John xiv. 5, 6.

full of grace as truth. His chief aim was, not to sanction any ethical system, or to inaugurate a theological system, but to originate a sacramental system.

When these three characteristics of our Blessed Lord's work are looked at, it is seen what deep roots they strike into the nature of truth and the nature of man, and how their arrangement is suggestive of much thought. For it is evident that a man must do God's will before he can hope to be rewarded with a further sight of God's truth. "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall *see* God." Revelation comes as a reward of action. Then when the mind has been disciplined by a mystery, it may be led on to the revelation of a sacrament. The soul's progress leads it to union, first with God's will, then with God's truth, lastly with God's life. Moreover, we see that the ethical code, which is meant by the Way, is not necessarily revealed —the mysteries which are signified by Christ, the Truth, are almost all necessarily revealed; and the sacramental system which is signified by Christ, the Life, is wholly and necessarily revealed. Again, though ethical truth is not necessarily dogmatic, dogmatic truth lies at the root of ethics. When philosophers leave the theological basis of ethics, they are forced to rest their ethics on metaphysics. And even as mysteries have an ethical import, whilst commandments are not necessarily dogmas, so likewise mysteries are not really sacramental, though sacraments are necessarily mysterious. Indeed, one of the earliest names for a sacrament was *μυστήριον*, and the Sacrament of Sacraments is still called the "Mysterium Fidei" in the words of

consecration. All this serves to show that the notion of the Way is completed by the notion of the Truth, and that both the Way and the Truth are completed by the Life.

We are only saying at some length that our Blessed Lord's chief mission was to found a sacramental system. Men had always enough light even in the darkest hour. Theology represents fallen man as being more wounded in will than in mind; even in his most headstrong moods, he knew more than he would do. When the Messiah came it was mainly to provide a potent helpmate of man's weakened will, and to connect this in some hidden way with an ethical discipline and an intellectual trial. Thus, strangely enough, the Sacrament of Sacraments seems to be connected in the Lord's Prayer with the forgiveness of sins—"give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses"—and, in the words of the creed, "the communion of saints" is followed by "the forgiveness of sins." This ethical discipline is accompanied by an intellectual trial, so great indeed that the blessed Sacrament is literally and not metaphorically a breviary of mysteries, including the Unity and Trinity, the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection, the presence of human nature without a human personality, and the presence of material accidents without their own material substance. But to those who courageously go through this ethical discipline and intellectual trial of the Blessed Sacrament, how great a life is granted to them in the close union and communion with our Blessed Lord!

The true force of our Blessed Lord's words has still

to be felt. He proclaims Himself not merely a Way, but the Way; not merely a Truth, but the Truth; not a Life, but the Life. He sets no bounds to His mission. He places no restrictions. His is not a relative, but an absolute ethical, intellectual, sacramental system. He is the Unrelated, the Absolute, the Infinite. He is not a king, prophet, or priest, but the King, the Prophet, the Priest, with all power, all knowledge, all holiness. His Word is law; His teaching is Truth; His Sacrifice is Redemption. His Kingdom cannot pass away; nor His Word; nor His Sacrifice. When His visible presence is withdrawn, His Kingdom goes on with His old authority and new visible organs of that authority. When His Word is no longer heard, it is taken up and re-echoed with its old imperativeness throughout the ages. When His life and even His death are over, the sacrifice of His life and death is daily renewed with its first efficacy. He does not establish a religion, but Religion; He does not found a Church, but the Church. He is thus the Way and the Truth and the Life for all ages and men.

Moreover, being the absolute ethical, intellectual, sacramental Person, the relations that bind us to Him must be absolute. And in point of fact the three virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity are hardly less than the three essential relations between the finite and the Infinite mind. Faith and Hope, indeed, are not virtues absolute. They are meant for a time. Eternity will end their mission to the soul. Yet Faith and Hope and Charity are absolute in the sense that they are complete spiritual assurances. Faith is not perfect

knowledge, Hope is not perfect possession, and even Charity is not perfect union. We see through a glass darkly and in an enigma; we hold but the hem of His garment; "we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be."[1]

For the moment we are concerned with faith alone, and with that Faith which was demanded, and perhaps necessarily demanded, by the Infinite who presented Himself to man's intellect as THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life. The absolute would seem to demand absolute faith. Yet as He was the Absolute, hidden behind the veils of the relative, the faith He demanded would seem to be at once relative and absolute. On analysing faith as an intellectual act, we find an objective and subjective element. As one man may know much, but only on hearsay, so may another man know a little, yet be quite sure of what he knows. Faith, then, whilst not absolute knowledge, might well be, as it is, absolute certitude. It was this absolute certitude that our Divine Saviour demanded from those on whose bodies or souls He was prepared to work a cure. During His public life He made absolute trust in His word the condition on which He gave His boons of soul or body. Nor need we insist on the peremptoriness with which the Master bade men leave the dead to bury the dead, and to follow Him.

Now, we are not of those to whom the Incarnation is a mere event; an event, indeed, with never-ending consequences, even as the fall of a leaf upon the face of the waters, if we may believe science, is a phenomenon

[1] 1 John iii. 2.

which begets a series of infinitesimal yet unending changes. The Incarnation is something more than an event; it is an institution. The Infinite does not pay the world a mere hurried visit, *Quod semel assumpsit numquam dimittit*. Even after the Ascension the substance of His presence remains as before; it is only the mode of His presence that is changed. There is a sense in which, to use His own Divine antinomies, the Divine Son goes to the Father, and yet remains with us always until the end of the world. The conviction that Christ is not dead but living, and that He is not really absent but really present, is the essential mark of a catholic, in contrast with a non-catholic, tone of mind.

Yet the fact that His seen presence is now withdrawn gives rise to peculiar difficulties. Even during His visible life, and still more after His ascension, the mystical and critical faculties of the human mind were active in penetrating into the ethical, dogmatic, and sacramental truths. Nothing could stem this rationalising, as it has been called, of Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We who have been the heirs of twenty centuries of this activity know to what lengths it has gone. In the sphere of ethics the development has been less marked; for the reason, doubtless, that the supernatural character of ethics is less marked. But in dogma the development, if slow, has yet been steady, so that much that was, as it were, only whispered in Holy Scripture, has since then been proclaimed from the housetops. Even the sacraments have witnessed to a gradual growth from simple rites to elaborate ceremonial.

Such development was inevitable, and our Blessed Lord not only foresaw it, but prepared for it. Of set purpose He avoided the finiteness and fixedness of a written statement of His doctrine and sacraments. All that He taught, He taught to His twelve Apostles, to whom He commended a spirit and condemned a letter. The same uncompromising demand upon absolute faith was to be made by the Apostles as by their Master. To hear them was to hear Him; and whoever on hearing their word would not believe it, would be condemned. If, then, development was part of the economy of the Incarnation, if the faith that was demanded of our Lord's contemporaries was to be demanded of the Christians of all time, if that faith was absolute certitude, though not absolute knowledge, if only objective certainty, *i.e.* Infallibility, can beget subjective certitude, then it would seem that the charism of Infallibility must abide with the Church to rule its faith until the end of the world.

We may present this argument for antecedent probability in another way. Let it be remembered that our imaginary friends to whom we are venturing to explain our position are not unbelievers, but believers; that they hold the divinity of Jesus Christ, the continuance of His work, the peremptoriness of His demand, the legitimacy of development, and the need of sacraments. Such a state of mind should surely lead them to see that even as subjective certitude in our Lord's day rested on the objective Infallibility of His visible personality, so now, when He is no less active though quite invisible, our subjective certitude

must still rest on the objective Infallibility of His invisible personality. Whatever mouthpieces He now employs to proclaim His message are but organs of His Divine mind; nor is this more than to assert with St. Paul that the Church is His Body. To our own way of looking at the matter, deep and patient thought on Christ *the* Way, *the* Truth, *the* Life, must lead men to realise that unless active Infallibility is now in the world somewhere, the Christians who saw Christ were better off than we who do not see Him, and hence that there is some exaggeration in His words, "It is expedient for you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you." [1]

To us who hold the doctrines, not merely of the divinity of the Son, but of His Real Presence on the altar, it would seem imperative to hold an active Infallibility existing in the Church. For what is the history of the ὁμοούσιος but a tragic story of the wiles of scholars and theologians, the weakness of individual priests and bishops, and, lastly, the triumphant definition of a phrase that nowhere appeared in the Written and Inspired Word? And what is this but an imperative claim to Infallibility? And if on such a matter it might be considered relevant to make a personal confession, we cannot understand how the Real Presence could have been safeguarded except by a Church which had a mind of its own on such abstruse doctrines as the matter and form and intention of the Sacrament. Indeed, Infallibility is altogether a lesser gift than the Adorable Presence, and wholly ancillary to it. It is

[1] John xvi. 7.

hard to see how our Divine Lord could have granted the greater without granting the less. So transcendant is the doctrine of Christ's Real Presence that even a greater measure of Infallibility might well have seemed to our minds desirable. If indeed every true priest is granted the tremendous powers claimed by those who show forth the death of Christ, I for one would not have thought the personal Infallibility of every priest too great a safeguard. It would then seem that the ethical, and still more the dogmatic, and most of all the sacramental, teaching of Jesus Christ would make Infallibility antecedently probable—and indeed practically necessary. For thus He would seem to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, not merely because He framed a code of laws and proclaimed a body of mysteries and left a system of Sacraments whilst still in the visible body; but because through His mystical Body the Church He still interprets the laws, explains the mysteries, and imparts the sacramental life to all who bow to Him as Master and to the messengers He has sent.

With this antecedent unbias—or, if you will, expectation—we are now in a frame of mind to examine the witness of Sacred Scripture. Our first word must be one of explanation and caution. Viewed abstractly, the witness of Sacred Scripture is not needed to support the claim to active Infallibility. Not only is it evident that a Teaching Body might be infallible without having written any inspired books of ethics, dogma, and liturgy, but it is no less indisputable that the Sacred Books which the Church has written and approved, instead of

making pretensions to be exhaustive, ingenuously proclaim their own omissions. Infallibility might still have to be believed were there no inspired Scripture, or were there no indirect mention of it in inspired Scripture.

Again, we shall not look to the Sacred Scriptures for words, but for things. We shall not be disappointed if on consulting our Concordance of the New Testament the word "Infallibility" is nowhere to be found. Remember *ὁμοούσιος* and *θεοτόκος*. We shall look out for the Bible's witness to realities, rather than to phrases.

Moreover, nowadays, when it is our custom to dispel so many difficulties by the concept of personality, we shall lay stress on the Sacred Writings indeed, but still more on the Sacred Writers; and consider their message, which in every case gains not a little from the personality of the messenger. The vexed questions of chronology, which almost equally serve to interpret and obscure doctrinal exegesis, we may be allowed to waive in favour of following the handier and more obvious plan of taking the Sacred Writers in their printed order.

Dealing with the four Gospels, the first plain fact lying too often unobserved on the surface of the Gospel teaching, is the call, training, and commission of the Apostles. Each of the Evangelists places the call of the Twelve in the beginning of his work. Matthew, Mark, and Luke unite in giving the words of our Divine Lord, "To you"—*i.e.* to the Twelve, as St. Mark records for us—"it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom

of heaven; but to them it is not given."[1] St. John records the solemn words of our Lord after the Last Supper, "I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you."[2] All four Evangelists bring their Gospels to a close with the scene in which our Lord gives His parting commission to the Apostles to preach to the whole world. Only when the mind has patiently turned this fact over again and again does it come to see the full meaning of it. No sooner does our Lord begin the Sacred Ministry than He is seen surrounded by a body of twelve men. He is never described without them. Even when they quit His side it is to prepare for His coming. The "little flock" is scattered at His death. But the resurrection to life of His real Body is the resurrection to faith of His mystical Body; and when He leaves them at last they are united once for all. The striking fact in the gospel narrative is the existence of these two groups, kept together, one by Christ's visible presence, the other by Christ's invisible Spirit. Nor can any ecclesiastical theory profess to found itself upon the written Word without accepting this fact. It does not surprise us, then, that critics, to whom a Teaching Church is an untruth, should be gradually driven to deny that the books of the New Testament give an accurate picture of primitive Christianity. But the very fervour of their denial helps us to realise

[1] Matt. xiii. 11 (Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10).
[2] John xv. 15.

that amongst the fundamental truths of the gospel is the existence of the Holy Catholic Church, which is not merely a body of believers, but a body of teachers.

This general view of the Gospels is filled in by a more particular examination of the Evangelists. St. Matthew's testimony in the sixteenth chapter of his Gospel is so well known and so peremptory that, of course, it has been considered as the work of a later writer. "And I say to thee, Thou art Peter. And upon this Rock I will build My Church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[1] The text is often quoted. Its full force can only be realised when it is recognised as a part of St. Matthew's teaching. His Gospel is unintelligible if we do not see in this text a reference to some sort of teaching body. For St. Matthew gives us the words of our Lord—"To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom."[2] He gives us the question of St. Peter to the Master, "Expound to us this parable," and our Lord's surprised answer, "Are ye also without understanding?"[3] It is St. Matthew who has recorded the classical distinction between the official teaching and the personal acts of those who "have sitten in the chair of Moses."[4] And his Gospel naturally closes with the momentous words, "All power is given to me in heaven and in

[1] Matt. xvi. 18, 19.
[2] Matt. xiii. 11.
[3] Matt. xv. 15.
[4] Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[1]

The witness of St. Mark may be looked on as the witness of St. Peter. Obviously the humble Prince of the Apostles would not insist on those texts which mentioned the Church's teaching office only by bringing out so clearly his own pre-eminence. But the calling of the college of the Apostles finds its natural place at the opening of his work. Again, he gives the words, "And unto all the nations the gospel must first be preached. And when they shall lead you and deliver you up, be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye. For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Ghost."[2] And his Gospel closes with the commission, "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature."[3] The textual question of the authenticity of the last passage may well be spared us. I do not know of any critic who would hold that the words as they stand are out of harmony with the Gospel of St. Mark, or with the spirit of the great Apostle from whom St. Mark set down what he wrote.

The last of the Synoptists follows his two fellow-Gospellers. He lays equal stress upon the call of the Apostles[4] and their commission to prepare for the

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18–20.
[2] Mark xiii. 10, 11.
[3] Mark xvi. 15.
[4] Luke v., vi. 13.

coming of their Master.[1] But one phrase of our Lord's address has been recorded by St. Luke alone: "He that heareth you heareth Me."[2] Again, when narrating the facts of the Last Meal, St. Luke alone gives the significant passage, "And He said to them, The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But you not so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is leader, as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth; and you are they who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom; that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren. Who said to Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest Me."[3] His Gospel closes with the scene wherein our Lord "opens their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures," so that they might be witnesses, and might preach penance and the remission of sins in His name unto all nations. St. Luke's further testimony in the Acts of the Apostles is

[1] Luke ix., x. [2] Luke x. 16. [3] Luke xxii. 25–34.

so clear and manifold that we must dismiss it with one remark. It is he who has recorded the Acts of the Council of Jerusalem, in which occurs the famous formulary, "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

Nor is St. John's testimony less clear than that of the Synoptists. He begins his Gospel with the call of the Twelve, adding many important details withheld by the other Evangelists. From him we learn in what words our Lord changed the name of Simon to Cephas. Scattered up and down the Gospel are other indirect proofs. But it is whilst narrating the "Sermo Domini" that St. John's clear witness is made. "Because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that I will do. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever. The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."[1] "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of

[1] John xiv. 13–17, 25, 26.

Me."[1] "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself, but what things soever He shall hear, He shall speak; and the things that are to come, He shall show you."[2] With these texts in our minds we are not surprised to read, in St. John's account of our Lord's appearances after the Resurrection, how our Saviour said, "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."[3]

St. Paul's witness is no less clear; but it is so manifold that anything more than a summary would be beyond the time and space at our disposal. Beginning with his earliest letters, it never fails unto the last. In his First Epistle to the Thessalonians he strikes the keynote, "For our gospel hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness, as you know what manner of men we have been among you for your sakes. And you became followers of us, and of the Lord; receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost."[4] "Therefore, we also give thanks to God without ceasing: because, that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but—as it is indeed—the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed."[5] "For the rest, therefore, brethren, we pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received from us, how you ought to walk, and to please God, so also you would walk that you may

[1] John xv. 26. [2] John xvi. 13. [3] John xx. 21.
[4] 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. [5] 1 Thess. ii. 13.

abound the more."[1] One characteristic text may be taken from his *Controversial* epistles. To the Galatians he writes, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. For I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man."[2] His *Christological* epistles abound in passages of the same import. The second chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians might almost be called the dynamics of Infallibility. "And you, when you were dead in your offences and sins, wherein in time past you walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of this air, of the spirit that now worketh on the children of unbelief, in which also we all conversed in time past, in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the will of the flesh and of our thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest; but God (who is rich in mercy), for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved), and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus. That he might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man may glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 1. [2] Gal. i. 8, 11.

should walk in them. For which cause be mindful that you, being heretofore Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh, made by hands; that you were at the time without Christ, being aliens from the conversation of Israel, and strangers to the testament, having no hope of the promise and without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace, who hath made both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, the enmities in His flesh; making void the law of commandments contained in the decrees; that He might make the two in Himself into one new man, making peace; and might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, killing the enmities in Himself. And coming, He preached peace to you that were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh."[1] But it is in the last epistles he wrote, the *Pastoral* epistles, that his most famous phrase occurs: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth."[2]

We may now turn from a general view of the proof from Scripture to a still more general view of the proof from tradition. We need not spend much time with the utterances of individual Fathers of the Church, though, indeed, these utterances have had no uncertain sound. The message of the Gospels and Epistles lost nothing in the keeping of the first apologists of the

[1] Ephes. ii. 1–17. [2] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Church. Even so early a writer as Irenæus could say, "For to the Church is entrusted the light. . . . Everywhere she preaches the truth. She is the seven-branched candlestick bearing the light of Christ." [1] "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace. But the Spirit is the Truth." [2] As the Church spread and met new denials in its spread, the affirmation of its teaching power grew more frequent and emphatic.

In studying the features of Early Christianity, it is imperative to take broad views if we would have true views. Mere acquaintance with the details of patrology can often hinder, as it may often help, an accurate judgment of events. That the Church—I will not say of the first six centuries, but even of the first four—was conscious of its doctrinal authoritativeness cannot be denied by minds capable of realising past institutions, and of feeling the full force of circumstantial and convergent proof. Such minds should first of all consider the various Creeds or Symbols of Faith. From the earliest ages the Apostles' Creed was imposed as a test upon catechumens before Baptism. It is not improbable that the primitive form of this Creed is earlier than some parts of the New Testament. Indeed, it is not impossible that it was in the mind of St. Paul when he reminded his Roman correspondents of the τύπος διδαχῆς,[3] and in the mind of St. John when he reminded the Lady Elect, or shall we say the Ἐκκλησία of Rome,

[1] "Adv. Hær.," V. 20. 1. [2] Ibid. III. 24. 1.
[3] Rom. vi. 17.

of this same Διδαχὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,[1] and, strangely enough, amongst the earliest phrases of the Symbol is that of the ἁγία Ἐκκλησία.

Again, due stress ought to be laid on the phenomenon of the New Testament. It is for some wise reason, that our Saviour has left us not one written word. Nor, as far as we know, was any written statement of doctrine drawn up under His personal and, if you will allow the word, visible supervision. The Bible is pre-eminently the work of the Teaching Church. It is evident that the theory of a non-teaching Church is unequal to the task of proving an inspired Bible. Moreover, if ever it is recognised that the New Testament, like the Old Testament, is not everywhere the work of one pen, even when it seems to be, the theory of a Teaching Church will have nothing to fear. Again, when it is recognised that two of the inspired writers were not apostles, and had not the apostolic gifts, the dogma of a teaching Church is seen to be a necessity. Even the mere acceptance of the books of the New Testament as inspired required an exercise of teaching authority which is very remarkable. On patient thought, we see that the detection, or, if you will, the recognition, of an inspired writer is almost equivalent to a revelation. Now, the Sacred Books of the New Testament have been guaranteed, not by our Divine Lord, but by the Church. If that warrant is uncertain, the inspiration of the books is uncertain. Absolute faith in the books requires absolute faith in the guarantor. Thus we begin to see the meaning

[1] 2 John 9.

of the phrase, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

That the ancient Church believed itself endowed with doctrinal authority is witnessed by the assembly of Councils—I do not speak merely of Orthodox Councils, but of heretical assemblies. The first Apostolic Council at Jerusalem was a precedent which every sect was eager to follow. The drawing up of creeds, the imposition of tests, became a matter of everyday occurrence. But whilst almost every large city had its heresiarch, and every nation anathematised its neighbour, amidst a storm of disagreement all were agreed in claiming the authority to teach. And the rack, sword, gibbet, cauldron, arena, are evidences that the denial of that authority was no laughing matter. Persecution is a blot on the history of Christendom. But it is fatuous to blame men for persecuting and then to claim them as supporters of the theory of a non-teaching Christianity. The sword and the gibbet are grim realities; they may mean cruelty, but at least they mean that the men who used them believed themselves inspired by the Spirit of Truth for the exorcism of the Spirit of Lies. The Church's way of dealing with heretics witnesses to the same consciousness of a teaching authority. Excommunication, like political persecution, is not child's play. We may condemn it. But we should do it the justice of recognising that the Church that used it was thorough-going and logical enough to claim that teaching power which alone could sanction the sword and the anathema. Thus Church History from first to last, from Jerusalem and Nicea to Trent

and Vatican—from ὁμοούσιος and θεοτόκος to Transubstantiation and *ex Cathedrâ* Infallibility—is nothing less than an assertion in ten thousand ways that the followers of the Apostles claimed to have the Spirit of Truth abiding with them for ever.

II

NATURE

We may now pass on from an analysis of the proof of Infallibility to an analysis of its nature.

The Vatican Council defined that the Pope is infallible by virtue of "the Divine Assistance." The reason for this formal word has been given in the prolegomena to the definition. "For the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter, *that by His revelation* they might make known new doctrine, *but that by His assistance* they might inviolably keep and faithfully expound the Revelation or Deposit of Faith delivered through the Apostles" (Conc. Vat. Const. Dogm. De Ecclesia Dei. C. 4).

Philosophorum verba sunt formalia. Philosophers and theologians speak formally. Still more do General Councils. The phrase "Divine Assistance" has a formal meaning which explains the nature of Infallibility by opening up broad and important views of the relations existing between the mind and will of man and the mind and will of God.

Three Divine charisms must be at once distinguished: (1) Revelation; (2) Inspiration; (3) Divine Assistance, with which we identify Infallibility.

Revelation is the manifestation of a supernatural truth or mystery. We take it for granted that the Infinite Mind knows more than the finite. Moreover, as those who know can tell those who do not know, we hold that God can tell men some of the things He alone knows. Now, communication of knowledge is communication of ideas, or in scholastic terminology, communication of species. The discoverer of a new plant can convey information to those who have not seen it by showing a photograph or by drawing a sketch of it, or by describing it clearly and fully. It will be seen at once that as men cannot communicate with one another except through such sensible signs as gestures, spoken or written words, so no human mind can transfer its ideas ready-thought to the mind of another. But what finite minds cannot do, the Infinite Mind can. Revelation is but the impression of a Divine idea on a finite mind. Nevertheless, when we speak of the "Christian Revelation" or the Body of Faith, or the Deposit of Faith, we mean that series of truths first impressed on the human mind of God made man, and afterwards made known to the Church.

Inspiration as distinguished from Revelation is not the impression of ideas, but the infusion of light to judge ideas. In this sense Inspiration is ancillary to Revelation; differing from it, moreover, in dealing with another aspect or function of the intellect.

Divine Assistance does not include the same immediate influence of the Infinite Mind upon the finite mind that Revelation and Inspiration include. Whilst not denying that it contains a positive influence, we may

be justified in looking upon its negative or prohibitive side as essential and perhaps dominant. Whereas Revelation and Inspiration are granted for the positive acceptance and acknowledgment of truth, Divine Assistance seems primarily granted for the prevention of error. This may help us to understand the historic exercise of Infallibility. Neither Popes nor General Councils have taken the lead in thought. They have no mission to lead into new ways, except in so far as they have warned minds off wrong ways. Infallibility has laid down nothing new; it has but safeguarded and explained what was old. It is judicial rather than legislative. It is an intellectual Court of Appeal, not a dogmatic Parliament. This accounts for the phenomenon that the utterances of Infallibility as a rule follow after long periods of discussion. The minds of Churchmen are exercised for some time before it becomes clear what is the Mind of the Church. The *Homoousios* owes a great part of its human efficiency to the battle of words that led the way to it. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, humanly speaking, owed its precise, formal, guarded definition to the six centuries of discussion that ushered it in. This aspect of Infallibility is laid down with wonderful clearness—I had almost said frankness—by the Vatican Council, "And the Roman Pontiffs, according to the exigencies of times and circumstances, sometimes assembling Œcumenical Councils, or asking the mind of the Church, scattered throughout the world, sometimes by particular synods, sometimes using other helps which Divine Providence supplied, defined as to be held those things which with

the help of God they had recognised as conformable with the Sacred Scriptures and Apostolical Traditions."

The relative position of Revelation, Inspiration, and Divine Assistance makes it clear that Infallibility is neither Inspiration nor Revelation. It contains no supernaturally communicated ideas nor infused light, though it is meant to safeguard and explain these ideas and this light. Whether private revelations or private inspirations are or are not given in the Church, no new Revelation, no new Gospel can be preached. The Book is closed. Divine Assistance is not equal, but ancillary to Revelation and Inspiration. And as it is a somewhat lesser gift, it should be easier to believe in.

The Council uses the two words *custodire* and *exponere* to explain the two functions of Infallibility, with regard to Revelation or the "Deposit of Faith." Both words pre-suppose a truth already granted to the Church; for it can keep only what has been given, and it can expound only what has already been taught. *Custodire* is borrowed from St. Paul's words to Timothy, "Keep that which is committed to thy trust,"[1] which in the Vulgate translation reads "Depositum Custodi." In rendering *exponere* by expound we have followed the official English translation. And though on the whole no other English word comes so close to the Latin *exponere*, yet there is more in the Latin original than is expressed by its English translation. The two functions of Infallibility grow out of the nature of the Revelation which Infallibility serves. The Deposit of Faith, according to the teaching of our Divine Lord,

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 20.

was to be like leaven which was set in three measures of flour until it leavened the whole, or like a grain of mustard seed which was set in a field until it grew into a great tree. In both cases it was a vital something. It could expand and increase and grow. It could be dwarfed, stunted, hindered, misled, stifled. But it could develop. Moreover, although it could deny its beginnings by developing along wrong lines, it was not meant to corrupt, but to grow; and, like all organisms, if it was to grow to its perfection, it needed some inward principle—shall we say, some ἐντελέχεια—which should keep it from all dangerous forces of its environment, and should help it to realise itself more and more in the various intellectual forms and languages of coming centuries. It is significant, indeed, that there were many pseudo-Councils before Nicea. Discussion on the Deposit had nearly corrupted the Deposit. When even the Divinity of the Son was denied on the strength of Scripture, and more especially on account of the fourth Gospel, it was evident that if Revelation was to be a light shining in a dark place, or a City set on a Hill, it must defend the Faith against a false rationalism. These affirmations had to be met by denials, and denials counteracted by affirmations. When false explanations and developments were a power with thinking men, influence could only be gained by true explanations and developments. To keep the Deposit it was necessary to expound the Deposit. Not to be driven back, the Church had to advance. The custodian of Revelation necessarily became its interpreter. From his strong treasure-box

in which his deposit had been kept, the householder brought forth new things and old.

The charism of Infallibility has been distinguished from Revelation and Inspiration. We must now distinguish it from Omniscience. Not only has Infallibility boundaries, but it is not omnipotent within those boundaries. The region of Morals, Faith, and Worship, *i.e.* of the Commandments, the Creed, the Sacraments, is handed over to its keeping; yet it cannot add to or subtract from anything that God requires His creature to do, or believe, or offer. It cannot promulgate an eleventh commandment; it cannot make a new Creed; it cannot add an eighth sacrament, or a second sacrifice.

Moreover, within this limited sphere Infallibility never becomes Omniscience. For example: the Trinity and the Incarnation are the two supreme and ultimate foundations of Faith, being the Mystery and Dispensation on which rests all else that we believe and hope and love. Now, it would be preposterous to hold that either a General Council together with the Pope, or the Pope without the General Council, knows all that may be known about the first of all mysteries—the Divine life of the Three in One. Indeed, the knowledge that it has may be likened to a book acquaintance with the Trinity. It is not first-hand knowledge. The Teaching Church is itself a Church Taught. It speaks what it hears; yet it does not hear everything, nor does it see at all. It is the warden of certain formularies which, as coming from the mind of God, are greater than it knows. It will die for a formulary; yet its martyrdom will be a witness to the unseen

rather than to the seen. When its children die for the faith, their strength is borrowed from what they believe and hope, rather than from what they realise through sight.

So, too, with the Dispensation—the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Teaching Church has a real and not merely a notional idea of Jesus Christ, true man and true God. It has lived with Him. He has trodden the same paths with it. He has taught in its streets. He has handed over to its keeping some of His secrets and a part of His unfinished work. But as there is a work which His Spirit reserves to Himself alone, so is there a part, and it is the greater part, of His secrets which He retains without sharing. We know Jesus Christ. He is true God and true man. He is good, kind, thoughtful, merciful, powerful in word and work, ever conscious of our thoughts and deeds, ever present with the Father in intercession for what we think and do. Yet in comparison with what we do not know of Him, the little that we know is but little better than nothing. In spite of His visible presence on earth or the span of a man's life—and in spite of His abiding presence on the altar, He is ever a hidden God. And thus the mind is led to reflect that a claim to Infallibility, were it a claim to Omniscience, would be as extravagant as any claim to omnipotence urged by the pride and the powerlessness of man.

What, then, is Infallibility? Its derivation from *in* (not) and *fallor* (I am deceived) will lead us to see that Infallibility means inerrancy, or the power of not being misled. Infallibility and error are not

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compatible. No man can be at once infallible and mistaken with regard to the same truth. Yet Infallibility is quite compatible with ignorance. Indeed, the Infallibility which regards Divine thoughts is necessarily ignorant of many truths which it does not know, and of many aspects of truths which it does. To make this quite clear we must bear in mind that though error is ignorance, or is accompanied by it, ignorance is not error, nor need it be accompanied by it. Error is the holding of a false idea for a true one. If in the twilight a man sees an object which he takes to be a horse when in reality it is a hazel bush, he is in error. If, however, he cautiously refrains from judging, and says, "It may be a horse, or it may be a cow, or perhaps it is nothing more than a boulder. I cannot make it out. I had better go up and see what it is"—in such a case there is ignorance, but not error. On going up to the hazel bush, the man has no false opinion to reject; but only ignorance to dispel. He does not say, "I was mistaken; and this proves it." He need only say, "Now I see how easily I might have been misled by the twilight!" Hence ignorance may be infallible; seeing that Infallibility is neither truth nor Omniscience.

What constitutes this Infallibility? Infallibility being exclusive of error, but not of ignorance, whatever prevents error will cause Infallibility.

Now, modern psychologists are realising more and more the suggestive doctrine of St. Thomas that the chief, and perhaps the only, source of error is in the will. The disciplined will is infallible. To recognise

the boundaries of our knowledge is the beginning and end of human wisdom. Infallibility is but the knowledge of what we know, that we know it; and of what we do not know, that we do not know it. Thus, if the stress were laid on the negative side, ecclesiastical Infallibility might be defined as "the keen and accurate realisation of our ignorance." On its positive side it is "the partial, but true and certain knowledge of what God has revealed." We are thus led to see that Infallibility in revealed truths, though a stupendous gift of God, is neither impossible in psychology nor unlikely in theology. For as Infallibility may be found in the rational sphere with those whose ignorance is self-conscious, so likewise may it be expected in the revealed sphere with those whose office it is to be conscious of the limitations of the extent and depth of their jurisdiction. Neither the Pope and General Council nor the Pope without General Council has any gift which has not its pattern and prototype in God's natural gift to men. Upon the official custodians of the "Deposit of Faith" God bestows supernaturally what, in the lower sphere of reason, is the possession of the humble of heart and will.

Moreover, as the motive of Infallibility would seem to be, not so much the communication of truth through the enlightenment of the mind as the prevention of error through the control of the will, it would be natural that the Divine assistance would be brought to bear mostly upon the outward circumstances which usually lead the will into error. This would account for the fact that, as Revelation and Inspiration deal

more officially with the communication of truth than the prevention of error, they naturally include a more immediate relation between the mind of God and the mind of man than we attribute to Infallibility. The "Divine assistance" which the Vatican Council recognises to be the essence of Infallibility is greatly concerned with the occasions, motives, and preliminary inquiries of an *ex cathedra* judgment. This would seem to explain the historical aspect of those tribunals which have claimed infallibility. It would be idle to assert that their message has always been unmistakable. It has been neither continuous nor easily interpreted. But in this they have only proved their right to rank as true lighthouses of the religious soul. Their light has been intermittent, now flashing for a moment, and then giving place to utter darkness; again throwing a dim ray, then burning steadily for a while, but always coming and going in a perplexing way. Sometimes these claimants to the gift of Infallibility have given a message which they have known to be true, yet mingled with other matter which they do not seem to recognise as false. Together with the Divine idea which they have enunciated a human element has mingled, which they would have been glad to eliminate. Sometimes they have seen a principle clearly and spoken it uncompromisingly without recognising how much it would be warped by the passions or prejudices of such as gave it assent. Sometimes they have seemed to stand still when men impatiently wanted them to move forward. But the Church, under the Divine assistance, has all the while been biding

her time, or waiting for more light, or listening for a Divine call to speak, or turning from a mere speculative question to the cure of souls, or expecting theory to yield to practical results, or encouraging discussion, or looking forward to the practical unfolding of events, or for good and wise purposes leaving falsehood to cut its way through and out of human minds. Take the Vatican Council, for example. Some of you may remember the interest—or can we call it rage?—of the nations when the Council prepared to meet. The wildest accusations were made about its intentions in theology and politics. Nor were the only disturbing elements to be found outside the Council. Six hundred men could hardly meet to discuss a vital question without showing evident signs of their common humanity. It may even be admitted that there were parties amongst the Conciliar Fathers; and that as an infallible decision does not necessarily guarantee the arguments by which it is defended, neither does it justify the polity by which it has been obtained. Some six hundred bishops from more nations than were assembled on the first Whit Sunday gathered together for eight months' discussion. There was no hindrance to speech. Yet at the end of their innumerable conferences, meetings, sessions, the document they issued was not quite so lengthy as one side of our morning paper. And at this distance of time, when their decision on Papal Infallibility is calmly examined, it is seen that the extreme party outside the Council were powerless to affect the calm wisdom of the Conciliar Fathers. Speaking for myself alone,

when I read the official acts of the Council in the classical "Collectio Lacensis" the doctrine of Divine assistance passes from the state of notional to that of real assent, and the mind holds it less as an inference than an intuition.

III

OBJECT

As St. Thomas holds that acts and functions are specified by their object, we naturally pass from the nature to the object of Infallibility.

One word of caution may be allowed us. During the few years that preceded the Vatican Council, a heated discussion took place amongst Roman Catholic theologians with regard to the extent of Infallibility. Strangely enough, the discussion centred almost exclusively round the Papal Infallibility. Yet, of course, the theologians of both sides would have readily admitted that it was not so much a question of Papal Infallibility as of Infallibility. The Popes nowise added to the inherent difficulties of the question, except in so far as their decisions were, perhaps, more numerous than those of General Councils.

To make the matter clear, I would ask you to compare the Vatican definition (which you have in your hands) with the following scheme, which was first proposed to the general consent of the Conciliar Fathers. "Hence, with the approbation of the Holy Council, we teach and declare, as a dogma of faith, that the Roman Pontiff, . . . by virtue of the Divine assistance promised

him, cannot err when, in the exercise of his office of supreme teacher of all Christians, by his Apostolic authority, he defines what is to be held as *de fide* in matters of faith and morals by the whole Church, or to be rejected as contrary to faith. . . . And since it is the same Infallibility, whether looked at in the Roman Pontiff as Head of the Church, or in the whole Teaching Church united with its head, we moreover define that this Infallibility extends to one and the same object." [1]

You will remark that a very significant omission has taken place. In both schemes Infallibility is limited to definitions on matters of faith and morals. But the first scheme limits Infallibility to *de fide* decisions; whereas the second scheme leaves the matter open, being silent as to whether they shall be *de fide* decisions or not. We are now upon a delicate point of theology where careful analysis is of the first necessity. Technical terms abound, and technical terms need

[1] Hinc sacro approbante Concilio docemus et tamquam dogma fidei declaramus Romanum Pontificem, cui in persona beati Petri ab eodem Domino nostro Jesu Christo præter alia dictum est: Ego rogavi pro te, ut non deficiat fides tua, et tu aliquando conversus confirma fratres tuos, vi assistentiæ divinæ ipsi promissæ errare non posse quum supremi omnium Christianorum doctoris munere fungens pro Apostolica sua auctoritate definit, quid in rebus fidei et morum ab universa Ecclesia tamquam de fide tenendum vel tamquam fidei contrarium rejeciendum sit; et ejusmodi decreta sive judicia, per se irreformabilia, a quovis Christiano, ut primum ei innotuerint pleno fidei obsequio excipienda et tenenda esse. Quoniam vero infallibilitas eadem est, sive spectetur in Romano Pontifice tamquam capite Ecclesiæ, sive in universa Ecclesia docente cum capite unita, insuper definimus hanc infallibilitatem etiam ad unum idemque objectum sese extendere" ("Collectio Lacensis: Acta et decreta SS. Concilii Vaticani," p. 273).

technical definitions, of which we will give the most necessary.

Revelation (or the objective Faith, or the deposit of Faith) is the body of super-rational truths made known and vouched for by God.

Faith (or subjective Faith) is the supernaturally infused virtue which enables the mind to assent to Revelation.

Now, it is evident that as God knows, not only what we of ourselves cannot know, but what we can know, so can He reveal what we of ourselves cannot know and what we can know. Those truths which the mind can only know through direct revelation are essentially revealed; they can only be accepted on faith; they are essentially *de fide*, *e.g.* the Trinity, the Incarnation, Original Sin, the Sacraments. Those truths which the mind could have known without revelation, yet which have been made known by revelation, are not essentially but only accidentally revealed; they are only accidentally a matter of faith; they are only accidentally *de fide*. The former truths are revealed *de jure* and *de facto;* the latter *de facto*, but not *de jure*. Thus, according to St. Thomas, the Ten Commandments are quite within man's powers of discovery, though the Sacred Scripture represents them as revealed.

Again, St. Thomas[1] distinguishes what is directly of faith from what is indirectly of faith.

Those truths are directly of faith which are "principaliter divinitus tradita," the chief points of revelation, *e.g.* the Trinity and the Incarnation.

[1] I^a, Qu. 32, Art. 4.

Those truths are indirectly of faith if their denial would include something contrary to faith; and St. Thomas exemplifies this by saying that to deny that Samuel was the son of Elcana would be to assert that Scripture was false.

Now, it is beyond a doubt that if Infallibility is granted to the Teaching Church, it must be granted for the safeguard and exposition of direct Revelation, which, as we have seen, is equivalent to sacramental and dogmatic truth. None of my hearers would be likely to dispute that Infallibility, if granted, would extend to doctrines *de fide*, *i.e.* doctrines concerning the faith. And though there is a sense in which ethical truth is a matter of reason or of the rational conscience rather than of revelation, it is commonly granted that an infallible Church should be infallible especially in matters of morals. Thus it should be easily granted that a real practical Infallibility—and Infallibility is nothing if not practical—would extend beyond matters of sacramental and dogmatic truth to matters of ethical truth, *i.e.* beyond direct Revelation to indirect revelation. But in deciding such matters the organ of Infallibility may employ many modes of condemnation. Opinions may be condemned as scandalous without any judgment of their truth, or as "offensive to pious ears," or as temerarious, or as ill-sounding, or as captious, or as suggestive of untruth, or as untrue, or as suggestive of heresy, or as wholly heretical. Thus an infallible Church, if she is meant to safeguard the morals, doctrines, and sacraments of her flock, will be obliged to pass judgments on opinions; and these

judgments will range from a simple decision that the condemned opinion, though probably true, is certainly untimely to a formal definition that an opinion is not merely untrue in point of reason, but heretical in point of faith. There may be thus two kinds of definitions about faith or morals, viz. *de fide* definitions and *non de fide* definitions. What, then, is the significance of the difference between the proposed and the accepted scheme of the Vatican Council? In the first scheme it was proposed to limit Infallibility, not merely to decisions on matters of faith and morals, but to *de fide* decisions on faith and morals. Infallibility was to be recognised only when the Church decided that a certain matter was of faith, and that its contradictory was heretical. This would have withdrawn from the sphere of Infallibility all lesser decisions, whereby opinions were condemned as untrue, scandalous, etc. It was felt by many members of the Council that this would be a narrowing of Infallibility beyond its true bounds. A proposition was made, and finally carried, that the question should be left undecided until some future Council. The formula was changed from its then determinate to its present indeterminate form. The Vatican Council has, thus, only decided that Infallibility extends to doctrines of faith or morals, and has left it undecided whether it extends beyond *de fide* decisions to those lesser definitions which belong to the everyday action of the Church; and especially to those lesser moral questions which regard matters not necessary for salvation.

I need not add that, though it is not formally defined, it is most commonly held that the Church is

infallible in condemning opinions as less than heretical. Now, granted that the Church condemned a proposition thus : "The proposition X— is scandalous," the question may be asked, Would the proposition X— now be heretical, seeing that it has been condemned by an infallible decision, and that therefore its opposite should be believed with faith ? To solve this difficulty, different answers are made. Some hold that the condemnation should be held, not with Divine, but with ecclesiastical faith. One point seems clear. If the censure has attached itself to the mode rather than to the substance of the proposition, it is not the substance, but the mode of the proposition, that must be held. If the proposition X— is censured as scandalous, we may be bound in faith to hold that X— is scandalous, yet not that it is untrue. Or if the proposition X— has been condemned as untrue, it might be heretical to deny that it was true, yet not heretical to deny that it was heretical.

As regards disciplinary laws, it is well to have a text of the Vatican Council before our eyes, wherein it declares that the Pope has immediate jurisdiction over Churches, and that—to quote the text—"all, of whatever rite and dignity . . . are bound by their duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience to submit, not only in matters which belong to faith and morals, but also in those which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church." [1] As a commentary on this text, we shall add the words of the Secretary-General of the Vatican Council, Bishop

[1] "Cons. de Ecclesia Christi," cap. iii.

Fessler: "Thus there are here distinguished four classes of matters belonging to the province of things ecclesiastical, which fall under the supreme power of the Pope—

"I. Matters of faith.
II. Matters of Morals.
III. Matters of discipline.
IV. Matters of government.

"In all these matters the faithful owe a true obedience to the Pope.

"Then in the fourth chapter of the Council's decree, entitled *On the Infallible Teaching Office of the Roman Pope*, the Council treats exclusively of the teaching power of the Pope—matters, that is, of the first and second class, faith and morals; not matters of the third and fourth class, *i.e.* discipline and government."[1] We may add one remark to these words of Bishop Fessler. It is, I believe, the common opinion of theologians that, though the Church may err in prudence in the application of discipline, and need not be infallible in particular laws for particular sections of the Church, yet in the principles underlying her general laws there can be no error in faith or morals. For example, there can be error in the principles underlying her law of yearly Communion or Infant Baptism. The same principles would also lead us to accept the common theological opinion, not yet formally defined,

[1] "The True and False Infallibility of the Popes," by Dr. Joseph Fessler. Translated by Ambrose St. John, M.A. 2nd edit., pp. 44, 45. London: Burns and Oates. 1875.

that the Church is infallible in solemnly approving a religious Order or solemnly canonising a saint.

We must preface our treatment of dogmatic facts with a few facts of history. Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres, died in 1638. In his will he left to his chaplain a work in manuscript on which he had toiled for the last twenty years of his life. Both in the prologue and epilogue of the manuscript he professed himself willing to submit to any change which the "Roman See" might think fit to make, seeing that, in his own touching words, "he was an obedient child of that Church in which he had ever lived; and that he was obedient even on his bed of death." Two years later the work was published at Louvain, where he had studied and taught. It was called "Augustinus," and purported to give the doctrine of St. Augustine on the nature of grace.

From the very first the Holy See looked with anxiety upon the new work. Within a twelvemonth it was condemned for having treated of grace in spite of Paul the Fifth's decree to the contrary; and for having published anew several of the condemned propositions of Baius, Jansen's old master. For twelve years a violent discussion raged about the orthodoxy of the work, until at length, in 1653, Innocent X. formally condemned the famous "Five Propositions" which had been extracted from the "Augustinus." In answer to this condemnation, the Jansenists urged that two things should be clearly distinguished in the papal act—the law (*jus*) and the fact. The law was the doctrine which had been condemned; the fact was

the attributing of this condemned doctrine to the pages of the "Augustinus." Whilst fully agreeing with the condemnation of the doctrine, the Jansenists maintained that the Church had no gift of Infallibility to decide the dogmatic fact that this condemned doctrine was contained in the "Augustinus." By their subtle distinction they opened up a wide issue, which the Vatican Council has not formally closed.

It would be hard to give a definition of a dogmatic fact. It must nowise be confounded with a formal dogma such as "The Son is Consubstantial with the Father." Moreover, it must be clearly distinguished from what may be called "a sacramental fact," such as the form of administering a sacrament. The Church rightly approved the Baptism of the Novations and rejected the Baptism of the Paulinianists. If there were no tribunal which could decide when a sacramental form was valid or invalid it would be impossible to safeguard the whole sacramental system. So that the Church from the earliest times has used her authority in deciding such matters. Moreover, dogmatic facts must be distinguished from doctrinal conclusions that are not dogmas, or, at least, neither dogmatic principles nor principle dogmas; *e.g.* the Divinity of Jesus is a principle dogma, the worship due to any part of His sacred manhood is a dogmatic conclusion. It is easier to say what a dogmatic fact is not, than what it is. In the concrete we see that there is no dogma contained in the proposition "These five dogmas are contained in the book entitled Augustinus." Yet if Infallibility is to mean anything lasting, anything

useful, it would certainly seem to include the power of judging what is or is not the plain theological meaning of certain words; and the fact that these words do bear this meaning we take to be a dogmatic fact.

It must be borne in mind that dogmatic facts are not pertinent to Papal Infallibility as such, but to Infallibility. The difficulty does not lie in the fact that whereas the Church might be, the Pope cannot be, infallible in dogmatic facts. The difficulty overshadows Infallibility as such, nor can it be rightly urged against the Infallibility claimed by the Roman Pontiffs when speaking *ex cathedra.*

The Vatican Council, no doubt for very wise reasons, has left the matter undecided. Infallibility is claimed for the Pope when (but not only when) he "defines a doctrine of faith or morals." Stress must be laid on the words "define" and "doctrine." The Council has no wish to affirm or deny the Church's, and therefore the Pope's, Infallibility, not merely in defining a dogmatic or ethical doctrine, but in deciding a dogmatic fact.

Yet it would seem that unless words are to mean anything or nothing, every religious organisation which formally rejects any doctrine, or ejects any member for upholding false opinions, has thereby claimed Infallibility in deciding a dogmatic fact.

IV

SUBJECT

From the nature of the Object or Sphere of Infallibility we must pass on to the nature of the Subject.

In the words of the Vatican Council which you have before you it is said that the Roman Pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra* is, by the Divine assistance, "possessed of that Infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith and morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, irreformable.[1]

We will leave till later on the task of explaining the meaning of this accurate statement of Papal Infallibility. For the moment we direct our readers' attention to the phrase, viz., the Sovereign Pontiff "is possessed of that Infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed." Here is a clear recognition and statement of the distinction between the Infallibility of the Pope and of the Church. That this distinction is valid may be judged from the fact that Infallibility resides not merely with the Pope, but

[1] "Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia Christi," cap. iv.

with General Councils, *i.e.* with assemblies of Bishops convened and approved by the Holy See. The Church may be said to have two organs of Infallibility, the Pope and General Councils. Whether these two may be considered organically or functionally distinct is a somewhat delicate point of theology.[1] Leaving this merely speculative matter aside, it should therefore be noted that Infallibility is primarily given for the Church, and in some sense resides primarily in the Church. The Pope has that Infallibility which "the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should" have. Neither the Pope nor General Councils are ends in themselves; they are relative entities. They look towards the Church. As the Virgin Mother of God had nothing for herself (except habitual grace), but all for her Son; and as the Son of Man graciously condescended to be what He was for our sakes, so

[1] Cardinal Mazella ("De Religione et Ecclesia." Romæ, 1896. Edit. 5ª, pp. 601 and 602), for example, holds that there are two subjects of Infallibility, viz. the Pope and Council, and the Pope without the Council. He adds the qualifying phrase that these two subjects are not adequately distinct (*adæquate distinctum*).

Another school of opinion is represented by the editors of Schanz' "A Christian Apology," from whom we quote the following words: "It would seem at first sight that there is what theologians call a twofold *subjectum infallibilitatis*. . . . This, however, is but a mechanical view of Infallibility which on closer examination is seen to have no foundation in reality. The attribute of Infallibility directly and immediately belongs to the supreme power of teaching. The promise of Infallibility is made to the *Magisterium Apostolicum*. But this supreme power of teaching with Divine authority and Divine certainty, although extended to many who are permitted to share in it, is yet essentially one and indivisible . . . just as the human soul is one whether it reveals its presence and power by one member or another, or by all at once" (vol. iii. c. 14, p. 535).

are Popes and General Councils provided with certain charisms, not for themselves, but for the Church of God.

So, too, may it be said in a very true sense that the gift of Infallibility resides primarily in the Church rather than in the Popes or General Councils. We may make this clearer by a comparison. A human being is composed of body and soul, or of matter and life (*i.e.* living force). By itself matter is distinct from force. The law of Inertia comes to mean that matter can receive force, but cannot change it. That highly organised form of force which is called life comes from the soul. Yet, strictly speaking, we do not say, "the soul lives." On the contrary, we say "Caius lives—he lives—the man lives—the person lives." The soul is therefore the principle whereby the being or person is said to live. Indeed, it is a most profound remark of St. Thomas that it is not this or that fragment of a composite being or person, it is the whole being or person that acts through the parts[1] as a king is said to rule through his officers and ministers. In the same way, though Popes and General Councils may be looked upon as the proximate principles or organs of the Church's Infallibility, yet it is true to say that in a certain sense Infallibility resides primarily not so much in Popes or General Councils as in the Church. When, then, it is recognised that Faith demands objective Infallibility, and that Conciliar and Papal Infallibility, though not subordinate to the Infallibility of the Church, are yet referred on to it, matters are seen in their true

[1] "Actus sunt suppositorum," which may be translated, "It is the substance that acts."

light. Moreover, another advantage arises. To thinking minds the real difficulties of the subject are against the mere idea of Infallibility. This should lead the mind to see that if objections are meant to be directed against the organ of Infallibility, they should not be derived from topics dealing with the mere idea of Infallibility; they should not rest on metaphysical or psychological grounds of impossibility, but on historical grounds, since the question of the appointed organ is a matter of history, not of philosophy. It is, then, illogical for persons who admit any kind of Infallibility to argue on *a priori* grounds. We must see what Christ our Lord appointed; and there the matter ends.

Into the inspired historical basis of Conciliar Infallibility we may fairly be supposed to have entered in the first part of our lecture. But we may rightly be expected to show reason why Infallibility is claimed by the Roman Pontiff.

One general reason is that, from the historical standpoint, Rome is the only Apostolic See that has chronological or theological continuity from Apostolic times. All other sees have been vacant, or have lapsed into heresy, or have laid no claim to Apostolic powers. Rome has never for any length of time been without an occupant; nor has it ever had an officially heretical occupant; nor has it ever wavered in its claim. I take it that we should all agree that the Apostles were Infallible, not merely when defining conciliarly, but when defining individually. St. Paul's strong anathema is against those who would deny his official yet individual message. If Rome cannot claim this Apostolic

power, what other see can? If Pope Pius X. is not heir to Apostolic Infallibility, is the Bishop of Jerusalem, or of Antioch, or of Ephesus? If we do not know whether or not these prelates are infallible, we have only to ask them, and we shall hear them protesting that they are not. Neither do they, nor have they ever been known to, claim Infallibility. And Infallibility must necessarily be self-conscious and self-assertive. If the only claimant to Apostolic teaching power has in reality no claims, then has this charism disappeared from the earth. And to some of us this appears so momentous an alternative that, if for no other reason, we should feel obliged to recognise in the present occupant of the Apostolic See the heir by default of the Apostolic Magisterium.

But there are other reasons for admitting Papal Infallibility, and of these the first is the proof from Sacred Scripture. In developing the scriptural proof of the Church's Infallibility we set down the witness of the various writers of the New Testament. No better method would be used in developing the Scripture proof of Papal Infallibility.

St. Matthew's witness is very clear. "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever *thou* shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[1] We must bear in mind, first of all, that if this text does not mean

[1] Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

any great gift for Peter, it does not mean any great gift for the Church. If Papal Infallibility has no support from it, then the Church's Infallibility has no support from it. We strike at the Church through the Pope. Indeed, it has been remarked that all the gifts bestowed by our Lord upon the Apostles collectively were also bestowed upon St. Peter individually. Without venturing to give a detailed commentary upon the words of our Blessed Lord, we would suggest that their true force can only be seen by observing (1) the metaphor of the House (ἐκκλησίαν), and (2) the contrast between the gates of hell and the Kingdom of Heaven, and again between the Rock and the Keys. The House is sure against the forces of Satan, because built on a Rock. In building a house the first thing is the laying of a foundation-stone; the last thing is the handing over of the keys. In our Blessed Lord's idea, St. Peter is rock and key-bearer—first and last—A and Ω.[1]

As St. Mark's Gospel is recognised to have been written under the guidance of St. Peter, it is not likely that it will contain many proofs of Petrine Infallibility. It characteristically omits almost every saying of the Master which would have exalted the Prince of the Apostles. Yet it may well be thought that in the end the omissions themselves become eloquent. They are the humility of self-conscious dignity. It has often been remarked with what wealth of detail St. Mark's

[1] Two phrases of our Saviour, "This is My Body" and "Thou art Peter," are equally clear, being made up of a simple subject and predicate linked by the verb "to be," yet both have shared the same fate of misunderstanding.

Gospel has recorded the three denials of St. Peter. But there is no detail in describing the scene at Cæsarea Philippi; and the momentous words, "Thou art Peter" are left out. An upstart competitor for power would not have been so self-forgetful. The last chapter of the Gospel has a sentence not devoid of significance. When the holy women see the young man at the empty tomb, they are told to "Go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before them into Galilee."[1]

St. Luke's witness yields nothing to St. Matthew's. Moreover, as so often happens, it completes what St. Matthew had left unfinished. To the Apostles gathered round Him at the Last Supper our Blessed Lord remarks that He is founding a kingdom (Βασιλείαν), the kingdom of heaven. Whoever is greater (ὁ μέιζων)—not (οἱ μείζονες) whoever are greater—shall not be like earthly kings, but like Him. The old contrast between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Heaven comes up again. "Simon, Simon—not Πετρε, Πετρε—behold Satan hath desired to have you (Apostles) that he may sift you (*i.e.* Apostles) as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee* (Simon) that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted confirm *thy* brethren." The parallel between St. Matthew and St. Luke is completed by the fact that in each case Simon presumed and was rebuked. St. Matthew represents him so full of his new dignity as to rebuke our Lord; St. Luke makes him boast that he will follow our Lord. In both cases our Lord chid him for his presumption. We may also

[1] Mark xvi. 7.

remark that if these texts lend no support to the Infallibility of Peter, they cannot lend support to the Infallibility of the Church. It is also well to note that our Lord's prayers are always answered. He prayed for the world. Yet there was a sense in which He prayed only for the Apostles. St. John records the phrase, "I pray for them. I pray not for the world."[1] Yet later on our Blessed Lord adds, "And not for them only do I pray." And as our Blessed Lord prayed in a special manner for the Apostles, so in a very special manner He prayed for Simon, that "greater one amongst them" whose personal faith was to fail in the hour of trial, and whose official faith was afterwards to be the strengthening band of his brethren.

St. Luke's next most important witness to St. Peter's Infallibility is in his account of the Council of Jerusalem. "And the Apostles and ancients assembled to consider of this matter. And where there had been much disputing, Peter, rising up, said, 'Men, brethren, you know that in former days God made choice (ἐξελέξατο) among us that by my mouth the Gentiles should have the word of God.'"[2] St. Luke had already narrated the dissension amongst the Apostles at the Last Supper as to who should be the greater, and how, at our Lord's clear choice of Peter, the strife was quelled. St. Luke again records another dissension, which was again quelled, not by our Lord, but by St. Peter, who boldly appeals to God's election *of his mouth* to speak to the Gentiles. When St. Peter had spoken, St. James, the bishop of Jerusalem, rose

[1] John xvii. 9. [2] Acts xv. 6, 7.

accepting as settled the doctrinal principle implied, he went on to suggest the practical steps to be taken in the matter. St. Luke has thus given us, not merely the bestowal, but also the exercise of St. Peter's power of settling disputes and confirming the faith of his brethren by a word of his mouth.

Coming to the witness of St. John, we have already noticed that, with his usual carefulness to give what the Synoptics had passed over, he alone has given us the actual changing of St. Peter's name from Simon to Cephas. There are other incidental signs of St. John's recognition of St. Peter. But these we must pass over in favour of the last chapter, in which our Lord thrice challenges St. Peter's love, and thrice conveys some privilege over the flock of the Chief Shepherd. The question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel need not here be entered into. Few critics would deny that the Gospel, if not actually of St. John, is at least Johannine. Moreover, whenever, or by whomsoever written, it represents the extremely weighty opinion of the Christians of Asia Minor—shall we not say the opinion of Hellenic Christians in sub-apostolic times? And John, their own favourite Apostle, who abode long with them, who had chid Churches founded by St. Paul, who had care of the Virgin Mother, who was beloved of Christ, who seemed to have a mystic promise of immortality—it does not shirk to represent as less than St. Peter in the mystic office of feeding the lambs and the sheep. The graceful metaphor of the Good Shepherd, which was alone recorded in this Gospel, is given, not to St. John, the beloved disciple, but to St.

Peter, who, like a true shepherd, was to shed his blood for the sheep.

The testimony of St. Paul nowise contradicts that of the Evangelists. Had the Doctor of the Gentiles never mentioned St. Peter, it would not have seemed out of place with his own peculiar office of Apostle. His lifelong work was to give practical effect to the theological decisions which St. Peter had enunciated at the Council of Jerusalem. The letters he wrote, with the exception of that to the Romans, were directed to Churches founded, not by Peter, but by himself. To quote the authority and name of Peter would then have been useless. And it has often been remarked with what deference he salutes the Roman Church in the opening words of his letter, using the phrase long since become proverbial, "Your faith is spoken of in the whole world."[1] Again, "And I myself also, my brethren, am assured of you that you also are full of love replenished with all knowledge, so that you are able to replenish one another. But I have written to you, brethren, more boldly in some sort, as it were putting you in mind, because of the grace which is given me from God, that I should be a minister of Jesus Christ amongst the Gentiles."[2] It was with this apology that he wrote to them at all; nowhere else does he appeal to his apostolate, and it is not without its vein of pathos that in tones of unparalleled eloquence he becomes the apologist of his own nation. His most striking testimony to St. Peter was written to the "Churches of Galatia." "Then after three years I went

[1] Rom. i. 8. [2] Rom. xv. 14–16.

to Jerusalem to see Peter, and I tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles I saw none saving James."[1] The full significance of this passage has been expressed by the Patron of your Society, St. Thomas of Canterbury, thus: "The Doctor of the Gentiles, who boasts that he had learned the gospel, not of man nor through man, but instructed by Christ, went up to Jerusalem, conferred concerning the faith with the Head of the Churches, lest perchance he might run or had run in vain."[2]

[1] Gal. i. 18, 19.

[2] St. Thomas of Canterbury on the See of Rome: Extract from a letter to his Suffragans, A.D. 1166—

"Sed et in initio nascentis ecclesiæ sicut beatus docet apostolus 'Christus cœlos ascendens, ut adimpleret omnia, quosdam dedit apostolos quosdam prophetas, alios evangelistas, alios pastores, et magistros ad instructionem sanctorum in opus ministerii, in ædificationem Corporis Christi.' Neque enim omnia uni committenda erant officia sed unumquodque membrum suo donandum erat officio; ita tamen ut caput, in quo velut in arce et quodam Capitolio virtutum omnes congeruntur sensus, et universis et singulis provideret, et ei vicissim omnia famularentur pro ratione conditionis suæ. Doctor Gentium qui gloriatur se non ab homine neque per hominem evangelium didicisse sed instructum a Christo post annos quatuordecim ascendit Jerosolymam et cum ecclesiarum principe de fide contulit ne forte in vacuum curreret vel cucurrisset. Et, ut plurimis patet exemplis, singula evangelii flumina ad mare unde orta sunt redeunt; siquidem fons Paradisi unus est sed in plura scinditur flumina ut undique irriget terram.

"Quis Romanam ecclesiam caput omnium ecclesiarum et fontem catholicæ doctrinæ ambigit esse? Quis claves regni cœlorum Petro traditas esse ignorat? Nonne in fide et doctrina Petri totius ecclesiæ structura consurgit, donec occuramus omnes Christo in virum perfectum, in unitatem fidei et agnitionem Filii Dei? Necesse quidem est multos esse qui plantent, multos qui irrigent quoniam hoc exigit processus verbi et dilatatio populorum; cum et antiquus populus cui unum sufficiebat altare plures ex necessitate magistros habuit; nedum modo

It would be hard to overstate the converging force of these testimonies. St. John and St. Paul were of such influence in the new Church that they alone might have successfully attempted to fill the place which we attribute to St. Peter. Yet their testimony is indisputable. St. Luke, the mouthpiece of St. Paul, is so full of the Petrine idea that, in the Acts of the Apostles, where he has compared St. Peter to our Blessed Lord, he can think of no higher commendation of St. Paul than to compare him, act by act, suffering by suffering, miracle by miracle, to St. Peter. And if Matthew is supposed by modern criticism to represent the Galilean tradition of our Lord's ministry, at a time when St. Peter had transferred his apostolate from Palestine, the witness of the first Evangelist has a force which of itself is overwhelming.

We must not pass over the confirmatory evidence of the two Epistles of St. Peter. The former of these purports to be addressed "to the strangers dispersed[1] through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." These were for the most part Churches founded by St. Paul. One of them, the Church of Galatia, had already received an epistle in which St. Paul gave an account of his having withstood Cephas. St. Peter's tone in

in concursu et affluentia gentium quibus Libanus non sufficit ad succendendum, et animalia non modo Libani sed nec totius Judeæ sufficeret ad holocaustum. Sed quicumque sit qui rigat aut plantat, Deus nulli dat incrementum nisi illi qui plantatur in fide Petri, et doctrinæ ipsius acquiescit" (Rolls Series, "Materials for the History of Thomas à Becket," vol. v. pp. 355–357. Epistola clxxxii., Longman & Co. 1881).

[1] Ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπόρας.

addressing these Pauline Churches is in marked contrast with the deferential character which we have already remarked in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Nowhere does St. Peter apologise for writing to these Jews of the Diaspora. Moreover, from the tone of the Epistle we may conclude that one of its aims, and perhaps one of its chief aims, was to prevent the Judaic Christians converted by St. Paul from wresting St. Paul's doctrine of faith and works to their own hurt. This is borne out by the many points of resemblance between it and the Epistle of St. James, which was equally addressed to the Diaspora,[1] and was confessedly written to warn them against a too literal and absolute acceptation of St. Paul's teaching on faith and works. If St. Paul's deferential tone to the Romans is in every way suited to the writer and his readers, St. Peter's tone towards the Pauline Churches is wholly in keeping with the personal character and official dignity of the Head of the Apostles.

The Second Epistle of St. Peter is so often considered the work of another writer that we would not lay too much stress on its evidential value in the Petrine question. It is for other judgments than ours to settle the question of its authorship. But we may be allowed to suggest that if it is not rightly attributed to St. Peter, it will ever remain an inexplicable historical phenomenon. The writer of it certainly claims to be the Prince of the Apostles, or at least one of the three who were on the Mount of Transfiguration. We may grant that forgers would be

[1] Ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ.

likely in those early days to make an attempt to personate the writings of St. Peter. But it would be hard to admit that they could pass their work off upon the early Christians, especially as it so evidently presumed to urge a temperate acceptation of St. Paul's teaching. Two striking passages occur in it: (1) "And I will endeavour that you frequently have after my decease whereby you may keep a memory of these things," [1] as if the writer were arranging for a successor; and (2) he speaks of the Epistles of St. Paul "which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction," [2] where we have the earliest and most authoritative comparison made between the New Testament and the Old. It would indeed be strange if the two truths of Apostolic Succession and the Canonicity of the New Testament should find such support from a forgery! If the Epistle is not the work of St. Peter, it will remain a historical mystery. But if it is St. Peter's own Epistle, it confirms, and indeed completes, the whole Gospel position of that Saint.

In these matters, as we have said before, we must not expect to find the modern phraseology of our dogmatic formulas. Nor indeed must we expect the thing as it is now, but the germ of it. Promises are largely prophetic. Like organisms, they are what they will become. Indeed, promises, like prophecies, are not interpretable until their fulfilment. The mystic promises given to Peter by Christ in His visible mission are to be interpreted by what they have become under

[1] 2 Pet. i. 15. [2] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

the providence and guidance of Christ in His invisible Headship of the Church. This is but to lean heavily upon the doctrine of development. But then all existent theories of Church government must lean upon the same buttress. There is no need to emphasise a point upon which all claimants to a historic religion are at present agreed. To make this point of view clear, we would draw attention to what may be called the Nonconformist view of the Ecclesia. Its more thoughtful defenders are everywhere claiming for it, not a mere reproduction of the Apostolic organisation, but a reproduction adapted to and moulded by the environment of to-day. In other words, they urge that their conception of Church government, though not representing what the Apostles did establish in the first century, substantially represents what the Apostles would have established in the twentieth century. It is a bold appeal to development, somewhat less credible than the development which we claim to have taken place between the Petrine texts and Papal prerogatives. We may state the same argument in a more statistical form. Let us take any great religious principle or dogma advocated by modern Christians, and compare the texts which support it with those which support Papal Infallibility. Can any one, for example, show that the principle of "The Bible is the sole rule of faith" has more foundation than Papal Infallibility? Or, again, in view of the fact that there is no clear Biblical distinction between bishops and priests, who would reject Papal Infallibility for insufficient proof whilst holding the superiority of bishops over priests?

Again, who would attempt to prove Transubstantiation of the Blessed Eucharist, or Consubstantiality of the Son by a Canon of Biblical Criticism which sees in the countless Petrine texts a mere primacy of honour or jurisdiction? It is sometimes a temptation for the mind to be scrupulous in the criticism of texts which lend support to doctrines it denies, and to be broad minded in interpreting texts which lend support to doctrines it accepts. But if the same canons of interpretation are to be used in interpreting all doctrines of the New Testament, the dogma of Papal Infallibility will be seen to be amongst those which, as they present the most intellectual difficulties, are most seconded by a weight of authority.

I need not now detain you with the Patristic proof of Papal Infallibility, which is convergent, circumstantial, and irrefutable to those over whom the principle of development wields its rightful influence. I will open and close the matter with words drawn by the recent appeal to the Six Centuries from the Regius Professor of History at Oxford—

"Every abuse of the medieval and even of the later Roman Church—Papal Infallibility, the Immaculate Conception, Transubstantiation, not to speak of a host of others—can be not unreasonably defended from the usage of the sixth, the fifth, the fourth, and even of the third century. This may seem a strong assertion, but, in spite of the great authority of Jewel, it can be maintained. Church history is a stream of development, and it is not possible to draw a line across it at any point, and say that what comes

before that line is sound, and what comes after is corrupt." [1]

In the *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1903, a writer of a different school of thought has the following words: "The elimination of Papal authority meant the introduction of a theory of the Catholic Church, which might be patriotic, but never had been Anglican. . . . In meeting Roman theories much might be done by historical research, but the proper field of inquiry for this purpose lies in the first six centuries of the Christian era. For it was then that the foundations of the Papal theory were established, and the ground which the Papacy had won before the time of Gregory the Great was never called in question by any national Church before the Reformation." [2] We may add that if history is to be of any use as an aid to faith, it is by its broad lessons rather than by its syllabic commentaries. It is surely, then, a most momentous fact that writers of such divergent schools of thought as the two we have quoted, should admit that by the sixth century the Papal prerogatives should have been developed and set in the heart of Christendom. Humanly speaking, it was to the action of the Papal authority that the most formidable attacks ever made on the doctrine of Christianity were driven back. If we still believe that the Son in His Humanity is of the same substance as His earthly mother, and in His Divinity is of one and the same substance as His heavenly Father—if we are thankful that we can still

[1] *Times*, March 2, 1905. C. Bigg, Christ Church, Oxford, Feb. 26.
[2] Pp. 141, 142.

say ὁμοούσιος and θεοτόκος—would it not be an unintelligible phenomenon that the same See which had kept the faith in these fundamental doctrines, had meanwhile denied the faith in claiming what had been her inward strength throughout the long struggle?

We now pass to the *modus operandi* or manner of defining Papal Infallibility. You will have noticed in the extract from the Vatican Decrees the passage beginning with the words, "And the Roman Pontiffs." These words were not in the first scheme of the decrees. They were added in order to emphasise the fact that the Pope, whilst exercising Infallibility, is not acting without the Church. It is but another way of stating the principle found in the next sentence, that Infallibility is not Revelation nor Inspiration, but Divine Assistance. There is a proverb that "God helps those who help themselves." Divine Assistance is only given to those who have exhausted all human assistance. The Pope, even when acting as Supreme Teacher, can only convey what he has received. He can safeguard; he can expound; he cannot discover or invent. In a "Relatio" made by the Bishop of Poitiers[1] before the Commission this point is pressed home with great force. "In these latter times it has been again and again urged against our doctrine that it forges some unheard-of, *separated* infallibility of the Roman Pontiff; and that the Head of the Church is thus cut off and separated from the Church. I pray and beseech you, out of respect for us, let that never be said again. . . . Put an end to this unfounded, imaginary, and harmful image of the head

[1] Right Rev. L. Pie.

separated from the body! Neither theology allows, nor history records, the beheading of Peter."

Again, it should be borne in mind that both General Councils and Popes are infallible only when addressing the whole Church, and not merely a part of it. A Conciliar or Papal instruction to the English or Armenian Churches might be true, but would not be infallible.

Again, the Infallibility of Councils and Popes is confined to the doctrinal decision or definition. These two subjects of Infallibility must intend to settle or close the dogmatic or moral discussion, not by a mere call to silence or passiveness, or outward submission, or obedience, but by a claim to internal assent. Thus long before the formal definition of the Immaculate Conception had been promulgated, Popes had forbidden the doctrine to be publicly denied or attacked in the theological schools. Yet it was only when Pope Pius IX. solemnly laid upon all Catholics the duty of yielding full and inward assent, that the doctrine was infallibly defined.

This intention to settle, close, or define the doctrinal discussion must be made sufficiently clear before the faithful are bound to give interior assent. Yet there is no necessity upon the Councils or Popes to use the formal phrase, "We define." It is enough if their words make it clear that the period of discussion is over, and has given place to the period of explicit assent.

And it is the formal statement or definition alone that is infallible; nothing else is. Preliminary statements, personal opinions, *obiter dicta* of a dogmatic

kind, commentaries on the words or phrases of Sacred Scripture, and even the reasons urged for infallible decisions, are not themselves infallible. Infallibility is confined to decisions or definitions; it does not extend to preliminaries or opinions, or accessories or premisses. Popes and Conciliar Bishops deciding matters of faith or morals are a rule of faith; Popes and Conciliar Bishops speaking as private theologians may broach heresy. Simon Bar-Jona denied his Master; Cephas, the Head of the Apostles, confirmed his brethren.

It is sometimes urged, and not without a show of reasonableness, that such distinctions and logical refinements as we have been making have an air of artifice, or that simple minds cannot grasp them, or that they merely irritate the common sense of modern thought, or that it is wrong to tone down such unpalatable truths as Papal Infallibility in our thirst for unity amongst Christians. To allay these teasing difficulties it should be remembered that all legislation, whether political or theological, is proverbially technical. To the simple citizen an Act of Parliament seems plain and obvious, yet it will give occasion to bulky commentaries and wearisome discussions and prolonged lawsuits when handed over to the care of the men of law. Moreover, explanations, or, if you will, refinements, such as these, or greater than these, must now be resorted to by all religious bodies claiming continuity through a historic past. I need not speak to you how much the three historic modes of thought within your own Church are feeling the need of refining or explaining the formularies hastily put together in the

sixteenth century, and now so anxiously scrutinised in the twentieth century. Nor can the various Free Churches escape the same duty of dogmatic precision in view of the formularies which are their rule of faith. The struggle between the two branches of the Free Church of Scotland is a proof ready at hand. A still more striking proof is furnished by the Free Church Catechism published only a few years ago, which in the hand of a Roman Catholic reader might be taken to mean a theological creed rejected by the Churches that drew it up. Even the Unitarian body seems to come under the same law, and modes of expression which represented their modes of thought in the seventeenth century must be interpreted if they are to be defended against the influence of twentieth century ways of thinking.

We may, then, be permitted as Roman Catholics to utter a meek regret that whatever efforts we make to draw near to our separated brethren, or to draw our separated brethren near to us, are doomed to meet with some, if never so little, misunderstanding. If any of our defenders, with more zeal than knowledge, insist upon enforcing the literal and unqualified acceptance of every phrase of Trent and Vatican, they are reminded, and perhaps rightly reminded, of the woes uttered by Divine Truth against such as "bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them."[1] If others, in the spirit of the proverbs, "odiosa sunt restringenda" and "philosophorum verba

[1] Matt. xxiii. 4.

sunt formalia," go on to give a strictly theological explanation of Conciliar and Papal decisions, they are met with the dispiriting remark that they are toning down, or paring away or glossing over, the real impossibilities and absurdities of our doctrines. This is hard to bear. But in the present case it can be easily borne if it is encountered, seeing that the statement of doctrine you have just heard does not profess to be a personal and a moderate, but a commonly accepted and accurate, view of Infallibility. Everywhere you have been asked to regard as of faith, what is of faith; as of opinion, what is of opinion; as of common acceptance, what is commonly accepted. And though no doubt the writer may have some personal opinions in matters of mere opinion, you have nowhere been asked to waste time in discussing the views of one theologian, on a subject where so much is imperative and so much is misunderstood.

V

OBJECTIONS

We must now consider the objections against Infallibility, which naturally group themselves under three heads—

1. Objections against Infallibility as such.
2. „ „ Conciliar Infallibility.
3. „ „ Papal Infallibility.

1. There are two ways of arguing against Infallibility as such. We may view it either philosophically or historically, *i.e.* either as an idea or as a reality, either as a possibility or as a fact. Some minds scruple about Infallibility because to them Divine assistance of this sort seems an impossibility. I may add that I have not hitherto met with any arguments in support of this view, which are not equally destructive of every kind of Divine government of secondary causes. The historical way of disproving Infallibility is by asserting that though Infallibility is possible to grant, it has never actually been granted; and that if it were granted, it would either prevent man's freedom of thought by enslaving him to an external tribunal, or that it would lessen his inducement to think by casting him upon an infallible oracle which would bestow the truth upon him without his thinking.

2. The chief objection against the Infallibility of General Councils is that they can err because they have erred. The Council of Chalcedon, it is said, approved of the "Three Chapters" of Theodore, Theodoret, and Ibas. Yet this did not prevent the Second Council of Constantinople (A.D. 553) from condemning what Chalcedon had approved. Again, the Sixth Council of Constantinople (A.D. 680) condemned the letter of Pope Honorius to Sergius. Lastly, whereas the Fifth Lateran Council declared that the Pope is above a General Council, the Council of Constance declared that a General Council is above the Pope.

3. In the same way, the chief formal objections against Papal Infallibility are derived from the supposed errors decreed or implied in the writings or acts of Popes Liberius, Vigilius, Honorius. Moreover, there is the often-quoted case of Galileo. Lastly, we must bear in mind that in writing to the Churches of Galatia St. Paul supports his message to them by the declaration that "when Cephas was come to Antioch" he "withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed."[1]

If we have barely given an outline of the objections —or shall we say the difficulties?—that beset the question of Infallibility, it is not from any disregard for their weight, but from the more prosaic reason that the morning is far spent, and I must consult your patience and my allotted time. Moreover, in the removal of difficulties—a task so essential to explaining a position—more is often done by broad, general views than by minute commentary and criticism; and we

[1] Gal. ii. 11.

would apply this principle not merely to the statement of difficulties, but to their formal answer.

I would, then, ask you for a moment to look with me into the philosophy of antecedent probability. To do this we must remember that as there are two kinds of minds, the reflexive and the unreflexive, so are there two kinds of difficulties, difficulties in idea and difficulties in reality, or difficulties in essence and difficulties in existence. Now, to the reflexive mind the main difficulty will usually be with the idea, whereas the unreflexive will scruple most about the reality. Thus there are minds that scruple most in believing what they do not see, and others that find it next to impossible to believe what they do see. Where the chief difficulties arise from the idea, no little relief is often afforded by the reality, and, on the other hand, minds fretted by the obvious limitations of the reality, find solace in the idea. Thus how many ideal difficulties are encountered in thinking out the complex dynamical equilibrium of even one throb of the heart! Yet the heart throbs. And in reality how simple it all is! Again, before our Blessed Lord came on earth, how contradictory and impossible seemed the prophecies and promises about His coming! Yet, to a thinking mind, His presence, His existence, His reality puts an end to all these ideal difficulties. New difficulties, on the other hand, were raised by His existence. But these in turn are lightened by the idea of the Incarnation. Thus there are two distinct types of mind. Some are tried by ideas rather than by realities, by dogmas more than by duties; *e.g.* they find no hardship in yearly

Communion, but they worry over Transubstantiation. Others, again, find the reality harder than the idea, and duties more trying than dogmas; it is not the Creed that frightens them, it is the Ten Commandments. One finds his faith quickened, another finds it weakened, by a visit to Jerusalem. X—— cannot bring himself to realise that Jesus was a Jew. Y—— had better be left alone in his belief that the Bible was written in English.[1] St. Thomas the Apostle seems to have been tried by ideal difficulties against the Resurrection. Yet the sight of his Master in the reality of His risen flesh put an end to his doubts.

Now, I know not where these laws operate more freely than in the question of Infallibility. It is not improbable that, despite the lack of *a priori* arguments, it is from the *a priori* side that the greatest difficulties should arise. Yet it is extraordinary how some minds placidly brush aside, as indeed they ought to brush aside, all these difficulties by accepting the Infallibility of the Bible, whilst bringing them back quite irrelevantly against the Infallibility of Popes or General Councils. They will thus implicitly admit the *a priori* possibility of Infallibility. But on *a priori* grounds, seemingly, they will never concede Infallibility either to the Vatican Council, which, if we may believe them, was captured by the Ultramontanes, or to Pius X.,

[1] It was difficulties of the reality that found vent in the sneer. "Is not this the carpenter's Son? Is not His Mother called Mary, and His brethren James and John, and Simon and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence therefore hath He all these things? And they were scandalised in His regard" (Matt. xiii. 55–57).

because the lad Joseph Sarto once worked on a Venetian farm. "Is not this the Son of the carpenter?" Others, again, for no very weighty historical reasons, deny to Popes the Infallibility so generously and justly conceded to General Councils; the ultimate psychological motive being in their case, perhaps, the fact that General Councils seldom sit, and Popes we have always with us. Yet it is clearly much less difficult on *a priori* grounds to conceive Divine Assistance granted to one Bishop than to six hundred. Strangely enough, as if sound reason would assert a semblance of itself, the Vatican Council of 1870 created more opposition than the definition of the Immaculate Conception, sixteen years before. However, some may think it was not quite consistent to be more disturbed by the definition of Infallibility than by the exercise of it. We must then recognise that in the vexed question of Infallibility room must be left for calm judgment and for a reasonable exercise of the historical imagination, lest the semblance of the antecedent improbabilities lurk unbidden in the mind.

Moreover, we must not merely be negative and critical; we must be positive and constructive. All truths have difficulties; the greatest truths have the greatest difficulties. So that it is almost a truism to say that where there is no difficulty there is no truth. We must not merely overthrow theories; we must set up a theory of our own. Of these there can be but four:—

1. There is no existent Ecclesiastical Infallibility.
2. The Bible only is infallible.
3. The Bible and General Councils are infallible.

4. The Bible, General Councils, and Popes are infallible.

If we reject existent Infallibility, we must go on to reject the New Testament as a true historical record either of Christ's teaching or of primitive Christianity. Moreover, if our rejection rests on the ground that Infallibility is impossible, our denial, like all thorough scepticism, turns out to be dogmatism of an extreme type. To conceive, as our imaginary objicient has conceived, that Divine Assistance must hamper true thinking, is really to fall into the common error that the First Cause, if it acts upon secondary causes, must necessarily interfere with them.

But if in our reaction from this dogmatism of denial we merely hold the Infallibility of a lifeless Bible, and not of a living Church, our difficulties would seem strengthened rather than weakened. We have admitted the Infallibility of a book, but not of its writer. And if we include the writer as well as the writings, we have granted Infallibility to the many authors of the book, and to the many more readers who, by Divine Assistance, infallibly judge the book to be inspired.

Nor do we escape difficulties by accepting the Infallibility of General Councils. For unless there was some infallible criterion, we should be unable to say which Councils were Ecumenical and which were not. Have we ever asked ourselves our reasons for holding that the first four Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon are Ecumenical? They were held in the East; they were dominantly Greek; they were not numerously attended, nor were

their decrees unanimously accepted in the Council or out of it. Other Councils were equally catholic, equally unanimous, and more numerous, without being recognised as Ecumenical. Is it not a significant fact that these Councils were approved and, indeed, inspired by the Ecumenical Bishop, the successor of St. Peter? Again, assuredly the *a priori* difficulties and historical proofs from Scripture and tradition are equal in regard to Councils and Popes. If Popes have been resisted, so have Councils. Arianism was at its strongest not before, but after Nicea. If Popes have personally left acts that require apology as much as explanation, so have Councils. The history of the "Three Chapters" is not without its moral, and, I may add, its consolations. If there have been anti-popes, still more have there been anti-councils. If Papal actions must be distinguished into official, semi-official, and personal, equally so must the acts of Councils. And, indeed, when one looks down the list of Councils in such a collection as that of Mansi or Labbe, it may well puzzle a simple-minded Catholic without guidance to know which are Ecumenical and which are not, and to say which are infallible decreta and which are not. Lastly, we should remember that Papal Infallibility was defined by the most numerous, most Ecumenical, and most unanimous Council ever held.

Before dealing more closely with the particular objections against Conciliar and Papal Infallibility, two facts should be well thought over. Infallibility has been in exercise some nineteen hundred years; yet the most searching critics can find only some two or three

so-called cases of error in these nineteen centuries. The case of Galileo is often quoted, and I dare say often misunderstood. But surely the stress laid upon it should lead thinking men to inquire whether, after all, there is not some supernatural assistance granted to an institution which, on the confession of its most determined opponents, has made so few mistakes in so many centuries.

Again, we have shown that all the difficulties urged against Papal or Conciliar are equally urged against Biblical Infallibility. But, in truth, the Bible, Councils, and Pope are in the same plight, if plight it be. Are the defenders of the Bible not learning to distinguish between what it teaches and what it says, between formal and material error, between its theology and its science? Indeed, to be quite consistent, the mind that refuses to accept Conciliar and Papal Infallibility must logically be driven to give up Biblical Infallibility, and must rest in the Infallibility of Reason until the hour when it awakes to the force of Butler's argument, and recognises that Reason itself must answer like difficulties or be drawn to scepticism.

To the objections which were urged against Conciliar Infallibility we must reply that whilst Chalcedon approved the writers of the "Three Chapters," Constantinople condemned the writings. The Sixth General Council of Constantinople condemned the letter of Pope Honorius; but its condemnation was not official, seeing that it had not received the approval of the reigning Pontiff. Again, Constance is not yet recognised as a

General Council. Until it is recognised as infallible, we may waive objections against its Infallibility.

To conclude with objections against Papal Infallibility. We have no intention of entering at length into the case of Liberius, Vigilius, Honorius. Those who would see in the action—we may even call it the imprudent action—of these Pontiffs a clear proof that Popes in their official character are not infallible, must prove that these Popes were making *ex cathedra* pronouncements, *i.e.* were uttering an irrevocable judgment on faith and morals, and were proclaiming it to the Universal Church. The same may be said of the condemnation of Galileo. The reprehension of St. Peter by St. Paul must be judged calmly. If it makes against the Infallibility of St. Peter as head of the Apostles, it makes against him *merely* as an Apostle. Now it is generally conceded that all the Apostles were infallible. To conclude that St. Peter would not have been reprehended by St. Paul had he been infallible is really to imply that none of the Apostles, not even St. Paul, was infallible. Moreover, if St. Paul seems to have reprehended St. Peter, not for doctrine, but for conduct, St. Peter speaks of St. Paul's Epistle, "in which are certain things hard to be understood."[1] And St. James is commonly taken to have meant his Epistle as an explanation of St. Paul's doctrine of faith and good works. But in refusing to interpret this reprehension by St. Paul as any argument against St. Peter's privilege, we are not coining a new interpretation to meet a new controversial need. We are in union with

[1] 2 Peter iii. 16.

the Fathers of the Church; especially with the Eastern Fathers, whose zeal for the Bishop of Rome, Patriarch of the West, was so great that rather than admit the reprehension of Cephas by Paul, most of them deny that it was anything more than a feigned dissension; or else interpret the name Cephas, not of Simon Peter, but of another. Lastly, granted that it was a real difference of opinion, and that it was Paul and Simon Peter, and not Paul and Cephas, it would be a paradox to hold that the reprehended action was an *ex cathedra* pronouncement on faith and morals made to the Universal Church.

There is a significant phenomenon in the history of St. Peter as recorded by the New Testament. Twice did he weakly consent to a denial; once of his Master, once of himself. We might perhaps say that he twice failed in faith even after our Blessed Lord's prayer that his faith should not fail. His first denial, a purely personal one, wrought no harm except to his own soul; but was soon repented of and nobly atoned for, at his Master's reproachful look. Later on in life, after he himself had initiated the evangelisation of the Gentiles, and had carried the Council of Jerusalem with him, he seems to have somewhat weakly consented to go back on his principles, in deference to the party of the Circumcision. It was no longer a personal, but a semi-official act, which, even after his repudiation of it, would assuredly lead to difficulties. That his regret for his well-meant course of action was sincere may be read in the gentle words with which he speaks of St. Paul in his Second Epistle. He was too conscious of his

prerogatives and too sensitive to his personal unfitness for his high office to bear any ill-feeling towards his outspoken fellow-worker in the Gospel. His history is that of his successors in the See of Rome. Not a few of their personal and of their semi-official acts need explanation, or would even justify reproof, could there be one with all St. Paul's disinterestedness, authority, and reverence in reproving. Yet the Bishops of Rome, in spite of what a St. Paul might be privileged to withstand, are still the successors in rank and prerogative of the Rock on whom the Church is built; of the key-bearer to whom is handed over the supreme power of opening and shutting; of the βασίλευς—Lord—by whose faith even the Princes of the Church are kept in faith; of the Shepherd whose duty it is to lead both sheep and lambs, and to lay down his life, though not his faith, for his Master's flock.

APPENDIX

VATICAN COUNCIL

FIRST DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING THE INFALLIBLE TEACHING OF THE ROMAN PONTIFF

Ipso autem Apostolico primatu, quem Romanus Pontifex tamquam Petri principis Apostolorum successor in universam Ecclesiam obtinet, supremam quoque magisterii potestatem comprehendi, hæc Sancta Sedes semper tenuit, perpetuus Ecclesiæ usus comprobat, ipsaque œcumenica Concilia, ea imprimis, in quibus Oriens cum Occidente in fidei charitatisque unionem conveniebat, declaraverunt.

Patres enim Concilii Constantinopolitani quarti, majorum vestigiis inhærentes, hanc solemnem ediderunt professionem: Prima salus est rectæ fidei regulam custodire. Et quia non potest, Domini nostri Jesu Christi prætermitti

Moreover, that the supreme power of teaching (*magisterii*) is also included in the Apostolic primacy, which the Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, Prince of the Apostles, possesses over the whole Church, this Holy See has always held, the perpetual practice of the Church confirms, and Œcumenical Councils also have declared, especially those in which the East with the West met in the union of faith and charity.

For the Fathers of the Fourth Council of Constantinople, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, gave forth this solemn profession: The first condition of salvation is to keep the rule of the true faith. And because the

sententia dicentis: Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam, hæc, quæ dicta sunt, rerum probantur effectibus, quia in Sede Apostolica immaculata est semper catholica reservata religio, et sancta celebrata doctrina.

Ab hujus ergo fide et doctrina separari minime cupientes, speramus, ut in una communione, quam Sedes Apostolica prædicat, esse mereamur, in qua est integra et vera Christianæ religionis soliditas.

Approbante vero Lugdunensi Concilio secundo, Græci professi sunt: Sanctam Romanam Ecclesiam summum et plenum primatum et principatum super Universam Ecclesiam catholicam obtinere, quem se ab ipso Domino in beato Petro apostolorum principe sive vertice, cujus Romanus Pontifex est successor, cum potestatis plenitudine recepisse veraciter et humiliter recognoscit; et sicut præ cæteris tenetur fidei veritatem defendere, sic et si quæ de fide subortæ fuerint questiones, suo debent judicio definiri.

sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be passed by, who said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18), these things which have been said are proved by events, because in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been kept undefiled, and her well-known doctrine has been kept holy.

Desiring, therefore, not to be in the least degree separated from the faith and doctrine of this See, we hope that we may deserve to be in the one communion which the Apostolic See preaches, in which is the entire and true solidity of the Christian religion.[1]

And, with the approval of the Second Council of Lyons, the Greeks professed: That the Holy Roman Church enjoys supreme and full Primacy and princedom over the whole Catholic Church, which it truly and humbly acknowledges that it has received with the plenitude of power from our Lord Himself in the person of Blessed Peter, Prince or Head of the Apostles, whose successor the Roman Pontiff is; and as the Apostolic See is bound before all others to defend the truth of faith, so also, if any questions regarding

[1] From the Formula of St. Hormisdas, subscribed by the Fathers of the Eighth General Council (Fourth of Constantinople), A.D. 869. Labbe's "Councils," vol. v. 583, 622.

Florentinum denique Concilium definivit: Pontificem Romanum, verum Christi Vicarium, totiusque Ecclesiæ Caput et omnium Christianorum patrem ac doctorem existere: et ipsi in beato Petro pascendi, regendi ac gubernandi universalem Ecclesiam a Domino nostro Jesu Christo plenam potestatem traditam esse.

Huic pastorali muneri ut satisfacerent, Prædecessores Nostri indefessam semper operam dederunt, ut salutaris Christi doctrina apud omnes terræ populos propagaretur, parique cura vigilarunt, ut, ubi recepta esset, sincera, et pura conservaretur. Quocirca totius orbis Antistites nunc singuli, nunc in Synodis congregati longam ecclesiarum consuetudinem et antiquæ regulæ formam sequentes, ea præsertim pericula, quæ in negotiis fidei emergebant, ad hanc Sedem Apostolicam retulerunt, ut ibi potissimum resarcirentur damna fidei, ubi fides non potest faith shall arise, they must be defined by its judgment.[1]

Finally, the Council of Florence defined:[2] That the Roman Pontiff is the true Vicar of Christ, and the Head of the whole Church and the Father and Teacher of all Christians; and that to him in Blessed Peter was delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the whole Church (John xxi. 15–17).

To satisfy this pastoral duty, our predecessors ever made unwearied efforts that the salutary doctrine of Christ might be propagated among all the nations of the earth, and with equal care watched that it might be preserved genuine and pure where it had been received. Therefore the Bishops of the whole world, now singly, now assembled in Synod, following the long-established custom of Churches[3] and the form of the ancient rule,[4] sent word to this Apostolic See of those dangers especially which sprang up in matters of faith, that

[1] From the Acts of the Fourteenth General Council (Second of Lyons), A.D. 1274. Labbe, vol. xiv. p. 512.

[2] From the Acts of the Seventeenth General Council of Florence, A.D. 1438. Labbe, vol. xviii. p. 526.

[3] From a letter of St. Cyril of Alexandria to Pope St. Celestine I., A.D. 422.

[4] From a Rescript of St. Innocent I. to the Council of Milevis, A.D. 402. Labbe, vol. iii. p. 47.

sentire defectum. Romani autem Pontifices, prout temporum et rerum conditio suadebat, nunc convocatis œcumenicis Conciliis aut explorata Ecclesiæ per orbem dispersæ sententia, nunc per Synodos particulares, nunc aliis, quæ divina suppeditabat providentia, adhibitis auxiliis, ea tenenda definiverunt, quæ sacris Scripturis et Apostolicis Traditionibus consentanea Deo adjutore cognoverant. Neque enim Petri successoribus Spiritus Sanctus promissus est, ut eo revelante novam doctrinam patefacerent, sed ut eo assistente traditam per Apostolos revelationem seu fidei depositum sancte custodirent et fideliter exponerent. Quorum quidem apostolicam doctrinam omnes venerabiles Patres amplexi, et sancti Doctores orthodoxi venerati atque secuti sunt; plenissime scientes hanc sancti Petri Sedem ab omni semper errore illibatam permanere, secundum Domini Salvatoris nostri divinam pollicitationem discipulorum suorum principi factam: Ego rogavi pro te, ut non deficiat fides tua, et tu aliquando conversus confirma fratres tuos.

there the losses of faith might be most effectually repaired where the faith cannot fail.[1] And the Roman Pontiffs, according to the exigencies of times and circumstances, sometimes assembling Œcumenical Councils, or asking for the mind of the Church scattered throughout the world sometimes by particular Synods, sometimes using other helps which Divine Providence supplied, defined as to be held those things which, with the help of God, they had recognised as conformable with the Sacred Scriptures and Apostolic Traditions. For the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter, that by His revelation they might make known new doctrine, but that by His assistance they might inviolably keep and faithfully expound the revelation or deposit of faith delivered through the Apostles. And indeed all the venerable Fathers have embraced and the holy orthodox Doctors have venerated and followed their Apostolic doctrine; knowing most fully that this See of St. Peter remains ever free from all blemish of error, according to the Divine promise of the Lord our Saviour made to the Prince of His disciples: "I have prayed for thee,

[1] From a letter of St. Bernard to Pope Innocent II., A.D. 1130. Epist. 191.

that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32).[1]

Hoc igitur veritatis et fidei numquam deficientis charisma Petro ejusque in hac Cathedra successoribus divinitus collatum est ut excelso suo munere in omnium salutem fungerentur, ut universus Christi grex per eos ab erroris venenosa esca aversus, cœlestis doctrinæ pabulo nutriretur, ut sublata schismatis occasione Ecclesia tota una conservaretur, atque suo fundamento innixa firma adversus inferi portas consisteret.

This gift, then, of truth and never-failing faith was conferred by Heaven upon Peter and his successors in this Chair, that they might perform their high office for the salvation of all; that the whole flock of Christ kept away by them from the poisonous food of error, might be nourished with the pasture of heavenly doctrine; that, the occasion of schism being removed, the whole Church might be kept one, and resting in its foundation, might stand firm against the gates of hell.

Atvero cum hac ipsa ætate, qua salutifera Apostolici muneris efficacia vel maxime requiritur, non pauci inveniantur, qui illius auctoritate obtrectant; necessarium omnino esse censemus, prærogativam quam Unigenitus Dei Filius cum summo pastorali officio conjungere dignatus est, solemniter asserere.

But since in this very age, in which the salutary efficacy of the Apostolic Office is most of all required, not a few are found who take away from its authority, we judge it altogether necessary solemnly to assert the prerogative which the only-begotten Son of God vouchsafed to join with the Supreme pastoral office.

Itaque Nos traditioni a fidei Christianæ exordio perceptæ fideliter inhærendo, ad Dei Salvatoris nostri gloriam, religionis Catholicæ exaltationem et Christianorum populorum salutem, sacro approbante Concilio, docemus et divinitus revelatum dogma esse

Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the Salvation of Christian people, with the approval of the Sacred Council, we

[1] See also the Acts of the Sixth General Council, A.D. 680. Labbe, vol. vii. p. 659.

definimus: Romanum Pontificem, cum ex Cathedra loquitur, id est, cum omnium Christianorum Pastoris et Doctoris munere fungens, pro suprema sua Apostolica auctoritate doctrinam de fide vel moribus ab universa Ecclesia tenendam definit, per assistentiam divinam, ipsi in beato Petro promissam, ea infallibilitate pollere, qua divinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit; ideoque ejusmodi Romani Pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiæ irreformabiles esse.

Si quis autem huic Nostræ definitioni contradicere, quod Deus avertat, præsumpserit; anathema sit.

Datum Romæ in publica Sessione in Vaticana Basilica Solemniter celebrata anno Incarnationis Dominicæ, 1870, die 18 Julii. Pontificatus nostri anno vigesimo quinto.

Ita est.

JOSEPHUS, *Ep. S. Hippolyti, Secretarius Concilii Vaticani.*

teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: That the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church, is, by the Divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, irreformable.[1]

But if any one, which may God avert! presume to contradict this our definition; let him be anathema.

Given at Rome, in Public Session, solemnly held in the Vatican Basilica, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, on the eighteenth day of July, in the twenty-fifth year of our Pontificate.

In conformity with the original.

JOSEPH, *Bishop of St. Polten, Secretary to the Vatican Council.*

[1] That is, in the words used by Pope Nicholas I., note 13, and in the Synod of Quedlinburg, A.D. 1085, "It is allowed to none to revise its judgment, and to sit in judgment upon what it has judged."—Labbe, vol. xii. p. 679.

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